

George W. Hall,
Newspaper Man and
Goldfields Entrepreneur in
Wales and Australia

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree
of M.Phil.

2015

Alwyn Evans

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*The
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FRIDAY, October 9, 1719

... News-Papers and News-Writers ('tis true) are now-a-days, in this critical Age, under many scandalous Censures and Reflections of imposing upon the World with Falshoods ; but this I have to say in Behalf of them, That the World is eager of being acquainted with the News as soon as possible : and therefore, we (to please them) are apt to catch hold of Reports which sometimes do not prove true. However, (lest I should be thought to side with Falshood) I'll leave that to the Judgment of the wide World, hoping some will give their favourable Opinion ; and let them know that I shall Print for my Credit, as I hope to meet with Encouragement ; and shall avoid all fraudulent Inventions to humour Parties, and tell the plain Truth on both Sides, without Favour or Affection....

(William Parks, 20-year-old printer of Ludlow, in his first publishing venture - probably also the same William Parks who emigrated to Annapolis, Maryland and became a newspaper publisher, Post Master, and official Government Printer to the colonial governments of Maryland and Virginia)

Summary

Most studies of the Welsh abroad have concentrated on their immigrant communities, and the social and work activities in those communities. In contrast, this thesis presents a case study of a Welsh entrepreneur, bridging the worlds of Wales in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and Australia at the turn of the century. It thus provides an examination of a trans-national figure, whose activities in newspapers and in gold mining make a contribution to the historiographies both of daily newspapers in Wales during that period, and of the role of newspapers in chronicling gold mining in Western Australia.

It examines George W. Hall, the subject of the case study, in the context of the newspaper and political world in South Wales, as well as Welsh gold-mining history, and also considers his contribution to Western Australian gold-mining and social history, particularly the development of the north-eastern parts of that state's Eastern Goldfields. The key role of Alexander Wilson Castle in Hall's activities in Western Australia is highlighted. It deals extensively with the role of W. Pritchard Morgan, Liberal MP and gold mine speculator in Wales and Australia, whose activities were inextricably bound up with Hall's. It further sets Morgan and Hall within the context of London-based speculative investment in mining at this time, and considers their place in the widening field of international investment in mining, including China and Korea.

It re-evaluates the importance of the roles played by Hall and others, notably Herbert C. Hoover, in the development of one of Western Australia's longest-lasting gold mines, the Sons of Gwalia, and also considers Hall's part in developing one of the largest northerly gold deposits of the period, at Wiluna.

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Cyflwynir y traethawd ymchwil hwn i'm gwraig, Zohrah am ei hamynedd,
cefnogaeth diflino, dioddefgarwch a chariad.

List of Abbreviations

BMD	Births, Marriages and Deaths Registers
chap(s).	Chapter(s)
dwts.	Pennyweights. Gold is weighed in Troy measurements and 20 dwts. make one Troy ounce.
edn.	Edition
ed(s).	Editor(s)
ILP	Independent Labour Party
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly (Western Australia)
MP	Member of Parliament
n.d.	No date
no(s).	Number(s)
n.p.p.	No place of publication
NSW	New South Wales
NZ	New Zealand
oz.	Troy ounce weight measurement
p., pp.	Page(s)
Portland Or.	Portland, Oregon
RCT	Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Government Authority
RGSSA	Royal Geographical Society of South Australia (Adelaide), Manuscript collection.
SA	South Australia
vol.	Volume
VT	Vermont, USA
WA	Western Australia
Yds.	Yards (distance)

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Introduction

This thesis examines the life of George William Hall, 1855-1915, a newspaper editor from Swansea, who, in middle age, became a gold-mining entrepreneur in Wales and in Western Australia. Born to relatively humble beginnings in Bredwardine, Herefordshire, he developed himself from being a chandlers' clerk in Swansea to be the editor of the *Cambria Daily Leader*, Wales' oldest daily newspaper. He changed career at the age of 35 and applied his self-taught skills in geology to become manager of a Welsh gold-mining company run by the 'Welsh Gold King', William Pritchard Morgan. He then went to Australia for a small London-based company, the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency, which purchased gold-mining leases and then exploited them to the point of sale. In the company's name in 1895 he bought a claim and developed the Sons of Gwalia gold mine, which was, before the start of the modern gold mining era, the second most productive and longest-lived continuously operated mine in the Western Australian goldfields. Hall was subsequently appointed managing director for the Agency in Western Australia. To date, there has been little historical treatment of George Hall's role and importance in opening up the goldfields of that state; doing so will also contribute to knowledge of the role of several other Welshmen in these gold fields. In fact, the Welsh in Western Australia overall have been little considered.

A study of his life and activities contributes to at least two major historiographies that have not been examined to sufficient extent, namely the role of the press in both Wales and Western Australia, and Welsh entrepreneurship during the gold rush in Western Australia in the decade spanning the turn of the twentieth century. The historiography of Welsh newspapers of the late Victorian period has ignored totally Hall's contribution to developing the *Cambria Daily Leader* as a major South Wales daily newspaper of the period. Furthermore, most studies of Welsh people who emigrated to Australian goldfields concentrate on the immigrant working men in those localities, and in particular focus upon their social and group history. A number of studies exist of communities in Australia with significant Welsh populations, of which the most important are the works of Bill Jones on the mining

communities of Ballarat.¹ However, there have been fewer studies which concentrate upon individuals of Welsh origin, the most notable and numerous of which have focussed on Welsh-speaking, but London-born, premier William Morris 'Billy' Hughes.² Robert L. Tyler also identifies individual prominent Welshmen, but concentrates exclusively on the Welsh settlements of Sebastopol and Ballarat in Victoria.³

This thesis is one of the first to open another and different window on the role of the Welsh in Western Australia, that of entrepreneurial agents, managers and influential directors of gold-mining ventures. L.J. Williams in 1988 stressed that Welsh owners and entrepreneurs remain a neglected group in Welsh historiography compared to its nineteenth century capitalists, who were 'uniformly presented as men of exceptional vision, energy and enterprise'.⁴ The same neglect is still apparent today; this thesis seeks to redress the balance somewhat.⁵ In order to fully appreciate Hall, this thesis examines the relationship between the London investment market at

¹ Bill Jones, 'Cymry "Gwlad yr Aur": ymfudwyr Cymreig yn Ballarat, Awstralia, yn ail hanner y bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg', *Llafur* vol.8, no.2 (2001), pp.41-61; 'Welsh identities in Ballarat, Australia, during the late nineteenth century', *Welsh History Review*, vol.20, no.2 (2000), pp.283-307; 'Welsh identities in Colonial Ballarat', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol.25, no.68 (2001), pp.34-43; 'Cousin Dai and Cousin Dilys? South Australia's nineteenth century Welsh heritage', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, 27 (1999), pp.28-43.

² For example, Donald Horne, *The Little Digger* (Victoria, Australia: Sun Papermac/Macmillan, 1979); Carl Bridge, *Makers of the Modern World: William Hughes, Australia: The peace conferences of 1919-23 and their aftermath* (London: Haus Publishing, Makers of the Modern World Series, 2011); Lewis Lloyd, *Australians from Wales*, chap. 9 (Caernarfon and Denbigh: Gee & Sons, Gwynedd Archives and Museums Service, 1988). Relevant to this thesis also is Lewis Lloyd's brief case study of William Pritchard Morgan pp.241-2.

³ Robert Llewelyn Tyler, *The Welsh in an Australian Gold Town: Ballarat, Victoria 1850-1900* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010).

⁴ L. John Williams, 'Capitalists and Coalowners' in Prys Morgan (ed.), *Glamorgan County History*, vol. 6 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1988), p.119.

⁵ Andrew Dilley, ' "The rules of the game": London finance, Australia and Canada' c.1900-14', *Economic History Review*, vol.63, no.4 (2010), pp.1003-31 provides a detailed rationale of financing ventures in these two countries and the relationship between British imperialism and influence and capital investment. S.F. Van Oss, 'The Westralian Mining 'Boom'', *The Nineteenth Century and After: a monthly review*, vol. 40, issue 237 (Nov 1896), pp.711-720 provides a critique of the situation when Hall arrived in Western Australia and the financial climate into which he ventured. Geoffrey Blainey's *The Rush that Never Ended* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1969) is the generally accepted authoritative overview for background to Australian Gold rushes. Though he does not deal with the Western Australian rush of the 1890s in any detail, he reprised and updated his work in his 2010 article (Geoffrey Blainey, 'The Momentous Gold Rushes', *Australian Economic History Review*, July 2010, vol.50, no.2, pp. 111-216), where he broadly covered the 1890s rush, and the successor 1990s activity. Another valuable contemporary source, which gives dramatic pictures of mining conditions and great detail on discoveries in the Western Australian Goldfields up to 1896, is Warren Bert Kimberley's *History of Western Australia* (Melbourne and Ballarat: F. W. Niven and Co., 1897).

that time and the developing Western Australian goldfields, in particular the later-developed Northern parts of the Eastern Goldfield, and emphasises Hall's vital role in opening up those fields. It also typifies him as a transnational entrepreneurial figure and sets him alongside others in the same field during the same period, notably Herbert Hoover, later President of the United States, Alfred Edward Morgans, later briefly Premier of Western Australia, and the successful entrepreneur Claude de Bernales, all of whose fields of activity crossed with his own at some stage.⁶

George W. Hall was an intriguing and complex figure on the gold-mining stage over this period, and some of his ambiguities, and the myths about him and his contemporaries, deserve more exploration, including his sense of identity, the locations with which he identified, and his political and social ambitions. The thesis must of necessity also give much attention to his relationship with the charismatic and controversial adventurer William Pritchard Morgan, one of the two MPs representing Merthyr over the 1888-1900 period. Throughout their 27 years of association, Morgan played a vital part in Hall's story; one cannot examine Hall without also examining Morgan's activities in considerable detail, since often it is only through sources of information on Morgan that Hall's role is revealed.

Writing about most historical lives faces challenges as far as sources are concerned, and in Hall's case the problems are complex because of the inconsistency of the quantity and quality of source material available across his lifetime. For his childhood and youth, the main dependable sources for the facts of his life and family are census returns and births, marriages and deaths records. Virtually the only other source for this early period relates to the occasion in Australia when he stood for public office, and this information, much more variable in quality and dependability, was also widely used in his obituaries. Unfortunately many of the assertions made in that election-gearred newspaper account have scant relation to accuracy, as they

⁶ Melville Davies, 'Claude Albo de Bernales - Wizard of Australia's Golden West' in Raymond E. Dummett (ed.), *Mining Tycoons in the Age of Empire 1870 - 1945* (Farnham and Burlington VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009) provides a detailed critique of De Bernales. For Hoover, see George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: the Engineer 1874-1914* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1983). For Alfred E. Morgans, see Jules Reaside, *Golden Days: being Memoirs and Reminiscences of the Goldfields of Western Australia* (Perth: Colortype Press, 1929, reprinted Perth: Hesperian Press, 1996), pp.49-51.

adapted or magnified several events in his life to present Hall in a way which suited his political needs, providing an embellished account of his previous political experience, praise for his social commitment, and his family antecedents. This emphasises even further the ambiguities that pervade his life.

Other facts on his early life must be deduced from his own journalism, and occasional newspaper references. In contrast, there is a good deal of material available about him from the age of 25, mainly in his own words, from his ‘Rambler’ columns for the *Swansea Journal*, *Herald of Wales* and the *Cambria Daily Leader*.⁷ Antithetically again, from 1890 to 1895, the only reliable information is what can be deduced from Pritchard Morgan’s company records, and some family-originated materials.

However, from the time of his arrival in Australia there is a wealth of information about Hall’s activities, mainly in newspaper reports and interviews, frequently self-engendered. This culminated in the tremendous publicity engendered at the launch of the Sons of Gwalia Company in 1898 in both London and Western Australia. Subsequent newspaper reports and company annual meeting reports over the next few years emphasise Hall as a prominent social and entrepreneurial figure, a star of the media and mining world for a few short years in both Britain and Australia. His family home over this period was in Adelaide, and extensive publicity in South Australian papers on the occasion of his divorce in the summer 1902 heralded a period of decline for him over the following three years, when press reports on his Gwalia Consols activities in the north-eastern goldfields and Wiluna became less frequent and more negative.⁸ From 1905 onwards there were very infrequent references to him, and after his departure to China and Korea, information is extremely sparse—one 1908 news report and a census return in 1911. Only following his accidental death in 1915, were there other sources available; a spate of obituaries,

⁷ *Swansea Journal*, 1880-83, *Herald of Wales* and *Cambria Daily Leader*, February 1883- April 1890.

⁸ Throughout the thesis, the area covered by the Mount Margaret goldfield and the area of the east Murchison field as far north as Wiluna, is referred to as ‘the north-eastern goldfields’, so as to avoid confusion with the Northern goldfield area of Western Australia, centred on Kimberley, and to differentiate them from the Eastern goldfields, which centre around Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. However, many contemporary reports, even by George Hall himself, referred to the area between Leonora and Wiluna as the Northern Goldfields.

several of them inaccurate in many respects, and the coroner's report on the accident, together with transcripts of letters in family papers.⁹ Thus, though Hall was a very public figure on two continents, there are large gaps in our knowledge of him; yet there is also a plethora of sources for two key periods of his life.

The thesis also examines Hall's political beliefs. It argues that he was a benevolent capitalist, who remained true to his Welsh Lib-Lab principles, and who took these with him to Australia. He was almost universally popular and well-regarded, and identified himself closely with both Swansea, and with the Northern parts of Western Australia's Eastern Goldfields. It can be argued that in his career he was both lucky and unlucky. An amateur geologist turned 'mining expert', he was lucky in the experience in mining he gained in Wales, and in the way he used this experience to good effect in buying and developing the Sons of Gwalia mine, which made such a massive and long-lasting contribution to Western Australian gold mining. This was the one big success of his life.

Yet he was also unlucky in that he was both late, and too early, for the age in which he lived. He was late because he arrived when the initial Western Australian boom had passed its peak in 1895, and despite his one magnificent coup, he continually struggled to find capital for his later ventures.¹⁰ The company he represented, the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency, a small and undercapitalised company, operated by winning easily accessible gold from mines they developed, which they then 'boosted' to the point of flotation or sale, whereupon they took their profits and moved on. At the turn of the century, such methods were being supplanted by hard-headed and newly-trained American managers whose companies wanted mines that were long-term investments.¹¹ These companies generally had sufficient financial backing, their approaches were geared to industrial

⁹ *South Wales Echo*, 20 January 1915; *Financial Times*, 21 January 1915; *Y Dydd*, 22 January 1915; *West Australian*, 27 February 1915; *Sun* (Kalgoorlie), 14 March 1915; *Adelaide Advertiser*, 31 March 1915, among many others.

¹⁰ *Mining Journal, Railway and Commercial Gazette*, 17 October 1896, p.1323; 31 October 1896, p.1385 cover the reasons for the depression. These ranged from shareholder impatience at lack of dividends because of difficult logistics to 'unscrupulous conduct of light-headed company promoters', and '...many a valuable enterprise... brought into bad odour because of a few worthless flotations'.

¹¹ For discussion, see Jeremy Mouat, ' "Just Now the 'Merican Expert is the Prominent Man": American mining engineers and the Australian mining industry 1880s-1910s', *Journal of the Australasian Mining History Association*, vol. 6 (Sept 2008), pp.136-149.

methods and their focus was less upon easy pickings of oxidized gold near the surface, and more on making profits in the sulphided ore of deeper mines through driving down costs of production and larger scale activity.

Paradoxically, Hall was also too early for his time. As is argued later, he had a gift for identifying mines of great potential, but at that period in time he and his colleagues lacked both the capital to deal with the mines' water ingress problems, and the technical expertise for treatment of the ore and gold extraction. Cyanide processes were still in developmental stages, and in particular, the arsenopyritic ore he encountered at the Wiluna mines in his later Australian period proved intractable for treatment by the methods of his time. These mines had to wait till the 1920s and 30s, after his death, to produce the rich returns that he knew were there.

The thesis examines the formative influences on him, the concept of his Welsh identity, and in particular how he used his previous experience as a Welsh newspaper man to promote and market both his mining interests in Australia, and his political and social aspirations. It refers particularly to a common theme throughout the thesis, namely the effect of the activities of mining entrepreneurs such as himself and Pritchard Morgan, the 'boomers' and 'boosters' on the London stock exchange, in creating the illusion of success in the mines and the promise of wealth through speculation on the gold market. The thesis also touches on some of the scandals that afflicted that market. In passing it refers to the influence of world events such as the second South African War upon the gold market, and the effect of the gold rushes as an economic, social and political force on the colony and emerging state of Western Australia. I also place Hall in the context of some other key gold-mining figures in Western Australia at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, to assess his importance among those individuals, and refer to some other mining men of Welsh origin in the newly emerging state at this period.

The thesis adopts a broadly chronological format, since the phases of Hall's life lend themselves to that treatment. However, because of the variability and overlap of sources this is not always possible. Also several themes run through each chapter and link many together; the press, entrepreneurship, and political and social matters in both Wales and Australia. I shall attempt also to examine the ambiguities in this

complex man, both in terms of his sense of identity and the ambivalence in his public persona, socially and in private life.

Chapter one outlines broadly what we know of his origins and early years, and will introduce the people who had most influence on him, returning to them in later chapters. The most notable of these, the aforementioned William Pritchard Morgan, in addition to being an MP, was a gold mine entrepreneur with previous gold fields' experience in Australia. In Swansea these influences included his employers, Thomas Trew and Samuel Williams. In Australia, the prime figure was that of Alexander Wilson Castle, his faithful manager and right hand man. Others include Sir John Forrest, the premier of Western Australia, and Alfred Morgans, owner and manager of the Westralia Mount Morgans mine. The most notable event of Hall's life, the purchase and development of the Sons of Gwalia mine, also introduces the figure of Herbert Hoover, who after flotation of the mine company became the first manager for the Sons of Gwalia Company. The thesis also looks at what we know about Hall as a person, in particular by using his obituaries.

Chapter two examines his development from a chandler's clerk, through writing an occasional column for the *Swansea Journal* to his employment on the staff of the *Cambria Daily Leader* and *Herald of Wales*, and culminating in his editing the *Leader* until 1890. It shows how his writing placed him firmly in the era's growing Lib-Lab tradition and examines how far his work reflects the 'New Journalism' that was developing in London at that period.

Chapter three discusses his first involvement with William Pritchard Morgan in 1888, something of Morgan's history, the relationship between them and the events of Hall's change of career to be a company manager in London for Morgan, and his role in Morgan's Gwynfynydd mine.

Chapter four details his arrival with Morgan in Australia, and his activities there in the period 1895-98. This chapter in particular shows how he used his skills as a newspaper man to good effect to 'boom' and 'boost' his claims, and to establish himself as a prominent expert in gold-mining matters and a public figure of note in Goldfields society.

The fifth chapter enlarges on aspects touched upon in the previous chapter, and deals with the major event of his life, the development, flotation, and sale of the Sons of Gwalia mine in Leonora, in the northern part of the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia. It also considers how, after the sale of that mine in 1898, the later public image of Herbert Hoover as engineer, politician and president led to Hoover's role in the development of that mine being vastly inflated, with an equivalent diminution in the role of Hall. This is further explored in Appendix 1 rather than in the body of the text, because, although an important part of the history of this mine, it is tangential to the subject of this thesis. While fully acknowledging Hoover's capabilities and his later major contribution to Western Australian mining, it seeks to re-balance the credit for that mine's development.

Chapter six traces the causes and features of Hall's fall, from being an influential social, political and mining figure in both Australia and Britain. It covers election defeat, a scandalous divorce, difficult market conditions, poor decision-making and consequent damage to his public image, and the ultimate blow of losing his most trusted manager, Alexander Wilson Castle. Declining public awareness of Hall's activities was only briefly changed by his tragic accidental death and subsequent obituaries.

The conclusion summarises what kind of person he was, and weighs his successes and failures, so as to assess his role in history and contribution to both Wales and Australia.

Chapter 1

Early Life and Influences

This chapter outlines what is known of George William Hall's origins and early years, and introduces the people who had most influence on them, returning to them in later chapters. It also uses evidence about the most shadowy periods of his life, gathered from often inaccurate or even contradictory obituaries.

It is perhaps a measure of the ambiguity that pervades his life that many of the key events depend upon sources that are less reliable, that were highly influenced by Hall's own presentation of his perception of the events, or that derive from others who had their own agendas. Apart from the births, marriages and deaths records, and census returns, most of what is available on his early life and background comes from his own family sources, particularly 1980s research, preserved in two similar files, one in the Battye Library and the other in the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia manuscript collection, by his grand-daughter, Irma Wigley, whose natural partiality was to portray her own grandfather in a good light.¹ Western Australian election publicity and obituaries in Britain and Australia in 1915 give us some broad facts on early life, but much is exaggerated, and unreliable or unverifiable.

Certainly, Hall's ambivalent sense of identity epitomises many of the difficulties and contradictions that surround him, a point to which this thesis returns later. His concept of identity as a Welshman was mutational to say the least. He was born in Herefordshire, of mixed national stock, but lived in Wales from his youth onward, and spoke Welsh. While aspects such as his sense of identification with Swansea, and particularly his love of singing and sociability, stereotypically 'Welsh', appeared as important to him as they were to his senior partner Pritchard Morgan, in many other ways, he seems to have placed little store on any adherence to any sense of Welsh identity. Indeed one can say that after he left Swansea in 1890, 'trans-nationality' characterises his activities and utterances. His activities compassed

¹ Battye Library, State Library of Western Australia, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A, papers of G. W. Hall 1895-1988, deposited by Irma F. Wigley, grand-daughter of George W. Hall; also to be found, with additional material, in Ms/Hall, G.W., Royal Geographical Society of South Australia (Adelaide), Manuscript Collection (RGSSA). Further additional material in correspondence between George W. Hall, Ludlow, late President of the Welsh Mining History Society and the author.

several countries and continents, and he seemed at home wherever he went. As Encel says, 'Ethnic status is inherited, which implies it can be rejected and disowned'.² George Hall's wife and children were all to remain in Australia, but he spent between 13 and 18 years, at the most, of his life in that country, and after his sojourns in China and Korea, returned to Wales, where he died; his ethnic status, therefore, remained fluid, to say the least. Throughout his Australian period, though his working sphere was mainly in Western Australia and specifically in the north eastern goldfields of that state, the fact that his family home throughout that time was in Adelaide, South Australia, adds to our perception of his presenting a transient sense of national identity.

This chapter also introduces some of the people who had a major influence upon him, who are considered in more detail in future chapters. First and foremost of these, who featured throughout Hall's gold-mining career, was William Pritchard Morgan. He in addition to being MP for Merthyr Tydfil from 1888 to 1900, was a gold-mining entrepreneur with previous goldfields' experience in Australia. He appears in ensuing chapters almost as often as Hall himself, since for many periods of Hall's life, including its end, it is only through Pritchard Morgan's activities that we can understand Hall's roles and significance.

In Swansea these influences certainly included his first employer, Thomas Trew and also the owner and managing editor of *the Cambria Daily Leader* and *Herald of Wales*, Samuel Williams. In Australia, the prime figure alongside Hall was his right hand man and faithful manager, Alexander Wilson Castle.³ Others who appear at significant points include Sir John Forrest, the premier of Western Australia, and the rapidly rising Coolgardie politician, mining engineer and investor, fellow Welshman Alfred Edward Morgans, MLA, of the Westralia Mount Morgans mine. The most notable event of Hall's life, the development of the Sons of Gwalia mine, also introduces the figure of Herbert Hoover, at that time a young, very capable mining engineer, but later president of the United States. Hoover was the manager of the Sons of Gwalia mine after Castle and Hall.

² Solomon Encel, Introduction to Jean I. Martin and S. Encel, *The ethnic dimension: papers on ethnicity and pluralism* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1981), p.iv.

³ See chaps. 4, 5 and 6 for more detail on Hall's relationship with Castle.

As has been suggested, the earliest verifiable facts on Hall's life and family come from census returns and BMD registers, and his parents' marriage certificate. Most other references to his youth come either from his newspaper writings, or else from his obituaries, which in turn depend much on the perceptions created by his election biographical details. We know his father was William Hall, a master tailor born in Hay-on-Wye, near the Wales-England border, who was living in Aberdare at the time of his marriage. His mother, Alice Elizabeth Davies, of Bredwardine, just on the English side of the border, was working as a seamstress or dressmaker in Christ College, Brecon when the pair were married at the College chapel on 8 May 1853.⁴ William was 23, and though the marriage certificate states that Alice was 19, she was in reality barely 16 at the time. The first child, Elizabeth Jane, born in 1854, died at five months. George William Hall was born in Bredwardine on December 28, 1855, but baptised early the following year, which later caused some uncertainty about his actual birthdate. His sister Alice Maria followed in 1860.

Census returns in 1861 record his mother, a tailor's wife, and her two surviving children living with the grandparents, George and Elizabeth Davies at the Old School House, Bredwardine.⁵ William Hall was absent, though whether he had separated from Alice, or was working in Aberdare, his place of residence at the 1871 census, is unknown.⁶ George Davies was a clockmaker, like his father Uidell Davies before him, and the family though humble, would have been less poor than many others in the local rural community.

Much of the other knowledge on George Hall's early years is drawn from a pen portrait in a cutting from an unidentified newspaper when he stood for the state legislature in 1901, and from his 1915 obituaries, several of which also draw heavily

⁴ Marriage Certificate 129, May 8, 1853, College Church, Parish of St David, Brecon. Other dates from St Andrews Church, Bredwardine Births, Marriages and Deaths records, confirmed by papers of Irma F. Wigley, author's private collection.

⁵ Census Return 1861, Bredwardine Parish, Herefordshire, RG 9/4226.

⁶ Census Return 1871, Aberdare, Merthyr Tydfil Borough, RG 10/5409.

on the information in this election pen portrait.⁷ From this it can be said with some certainty that his early education was in the village of his birth, Bredwardine, and subsequently at a small village school in Staunton, in the Forest of Dean, and that he studied classics, mathematics and history with a tutor, a Reverend William Howell, and science with other masters. The same cutting tells us that he was involved in underground mining work. Since he certainly lived at some time in his youth in Aberdare, where his father was living and working at that time, it is probable that his earliest mining experience was obtained in that community or nearby. This would also have given him the chance to develop the practical side of his early interest in geology.

From 1868 onwards, the author's family sank a pit at Fforchneol, further up the Aman valley from Aberdare. There is a family tradition that George Hall was regarded as an 'adopted elder son' by the author's great-grandfather, Rees Bevan, and it may well have been that he worked at Fforchneol, the family mine in that valley. He certainly kept contact with the Bevan family of Hirwaun into the 1900s, and, exceptionally, an *Aberdare Leader* obituary records him as being a 'Hirwaun man', which may lend some credence to the Bevan family's stories.⁸ However, there are no recognized sources that confirm his having worked at the Fforchneol pit, as that mine's company documentation has all been destroyed. Yet, Hall's election biography related that he spent 'considerable time working underground in both coal and metalliferous mines, gaining what has stood him in good stead ever since, a practical knowledge of underground work'.⁹

Whatever the reality, by about 1875 he was working in Swansea as a shipping clerk employed by a local Chandler; therefore his practical underground experience prior to that date would have been limited. After Swansea also, in the 1890-95 period,

⁷ Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/6, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988, cutting from an unidentified and undated newspaper, collected by Frank Hall, G.W. Hall's son, circa 1901; also Ms/ G.W.Hall, RGSSA.

⁸ *Aberdare Leader*, 23 January 1915; invitation to Miss Polly Bevan (the author's great-great-aunt) to the Ladies' Balcony of the Grand Hall, Hotel Cécil, London, 26 September 1900 to attend the dinner in honour of George W. Hall, author's private collection.

⁹ see footnote 21 and 22. However, he would only have been 13 in 1868. While we know the *Western Mail*, 20 January 1875, records that Rees Bevan was prosecuted in 1875 for allowing a boy under 12 to work in Fforchneol, there are no extant records for this mine, so we cannot prove if Hall worked there at a young age.

his role relating to Pritchard Morgan's mine at Gwynfynydd would have been his capacity as Company Secretary, not as an underground worker; at best, it may have involved going underground on occasion for geological analysis.

His own columns in the *Cambria Daily Leader* confirmed that he had lived in Aberdare, and had often played cricket in his adolescence in Aberdare Park. This was reinforced further in his newspaper columns during Pritchard Morgan's by-election campaign in 1888 where he referred to travelling from Swansea to Merthyr via his 'early haunts' in Aberdare.¹⁰ Also an *Aberdare Times* account at the time of the flotation of the Sons of Gwalia mine referred briefly to his upbringing at 'Bank Shop', Aberdare.¹¹ This was augmented by the 1871 census evidence of his widowed father aged 43, and his sister Alice Maria Hall, aged 10 living at 268, Cardiff Road in Aberdare, though George Hall himself was not living there during that census. Writing in a *Herald of Wales* 'Rambler' column in 1883, Hall referred to a current Egyptian cholera epidemic and recalled the last such epidemic in South Wales in 1868 when he 'was spending my holidays in Aberdare'.¹² Thus at that date, at the age of 13, he may still have been living with his grandfather in Bredwardine, or else have been away at school in Staunton, but visiting his father during a holiday period. Arguably also, a 16-year-old George Hall, born in Herefordshire, who in the 1871 census was an assistant living in Lewis Jones' grocer's shop at 1 Victoria Road, Merthyr, was our George Hall; no other George Hall of that age and birth county is recorded in the England and Wales census for that year.¹³ It is certainly feasible also that his life-long need to identify with places and organisations with which he associated stemmed from his early childhood experiences, losing his 24-year-old mother in 1861 and his grandmother in 1864, with his father being an absentee in Aberdare, and the grandfather, with whom he appears to have lived since birth, remarrying early in 1865.¹⁴ It is not surprising therefore that Hall was able to identify himself completely with Swansea as his 'home town', and as will be seen, in Australia he regarded the Mount Margaret goldfield as 'his' goldfield.¹⁵

¹⁰ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 26 September 1888.

¹¹ *Aberdare Times*, 12 March 1898.

¹² *Herald of Wales*, 28 July 1883. Hall's memory may be inaccurate in giving a date of 1868, as the last great epidemic in South Wales took place in 1865-6.

¹³ Census return, Merthyr Borough 1871, RG10/5395.

¹⁴ Parish register, St Andrews Church, Bredwardine, Herefordshire for all BMD references.

¹⁵ See chaps. 4, 5 and 6.

His *Herald of Wales* obituary referred to his working ‘from his early youth’ for Thomas Trew, a prosperous Swansea merchant.¹⁶ Yet, on leaving Swansea in 1890 he referred to having lived there for ‘above 15 years’, which suggests that he arrived in the town at the age of around 20. At 23, while living in 23 Prospect Place, Sketty, he had married a Devon girl, Martha Mary Huxtable, and by 1881 they had a one-year-old son, also named George William.¹⁷ Certainly, by the 1881 census, he lived with his wife, sister-in-law and infant son at 26 New Oxford Street; his occupation, a shipping clerk. The *Swansea Journal* had carried his ‘Notes by a Swansea Rambler’ column from 1880. He was then taken on in 1883 as a reporter by the *Cambria Daily Leader* and the weekly *Herald of Wales* and his column was consequently transferred to the *Herald of Wales*, and also reprinted as a weekly column in the *Daily Leader*.¹⁸ Several obituaries asserted that he was well known as a lecturer in geology in the Swansea area.

Hall’s identification with Wales, and with Swansea was always emphasised. In 1915 his *Herald of Wales* obituary averred that ‘Although Mr Hall had severed his connection with the town for many years he always regarded it as his home and one of the best and most sociable places in the universe’. Similarly, he wrote fondly in 1888 of Aberdare as the town of his youth; yet his election biography for the Western Australian Legislature also stressed his Scottish, Irish, Norman and English ancestry. Indeed, he was often described in other newspaper reports and at after-dinner speeches as a ‘Celt’ rather than a Welshman.

Hall’s personality and character are revealed throughout this thesis, but in order to understand him fully, some general discussion of these is helpful here. Of crucial importance to what occurred later in his life was his thirst for knowledge, curiosity and wide reading. A great autodidact, his *Herald of Wales* obituary recounted how he improved himself:

¹⁶ *Herald of Wales*, 23 January 1915; virtually the same obituary had appeared in the *Cambria Daily Leader*, 20 January 1915.

¹⁷ Marriage register entry 185, Swansea Parish Church, 30 November 1879; Census return, RG11/5362, Swansea 1881.

¹⁸ For a full discussion of his newspaper career in Swansea, see chap. 2.

Of studious disposition, he made the most of his opportunities to improve his knowledge, reading into the small hours technical works which later in life proved invaluable to him in the metallurgical sphere in which he moved, and from which he amassed considerable sums of money.¹⁹

This, his most comprehensive and accurate obituary, referred extensively to his Swansea period, enlarging on his generosity, selflessness and kindness. These aspects of his character and his social conscience were to be manifest throughout his Western Australian period, and were also reflected in the recollections of his family. His grand-daughter Irma Wigley wrote of him in her monograph, 'Engrossed in music clubs and anything which would improve the lot of the people, his dedication to the goldfields and W.A. became his main interest'.²⁰

Though the *Cambria Daily Leader* and *Herald of Wales* obituary did reproduce some of the misinformation found in his Australian electoral addresses, it also had a great deal of specific Swansea detail by people who were clearly well familiar with him in that town. In particular it referred to his public speaking and debating prowess, and Hall's acting capability, a 'fine exponent of the histrionic art' in local productions. The obituary also exemplified his typical generosity; it recalled that when the daughter of an old friend, Mr J. Moy Evans, was to be married, he had supplied the bridegroom with sufficient gold from the Gwynfynydd Mine to provide a wedding ring.²¹ It praised his 'proverbial' bonhomie, 'one of the most fascinating of conversationalists' and said he 'was a keen observer, and his marvellous and vivid descriptions of men and things never failed to win admiration'. This obituary certainly gave the most dependable account of him as a person, though it contained little detail on his Australia or Asian activities.

Several people were attributed with having had a significant influence on him. Hall used his 'Rambler' column to pay tribute to his first employer in Swansea, Thomas Trew, who, in addition to being a prosperous merchant and ship's chandler, was also a Liberal town councillor. Indeed, a succession of early *Cambria Daily*

¹⁹ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 20 January 1915; *Herald of Wales*, 23 January 1915.

²⁰ Ms. Hall, G.W., *George William Hall 1855-1915: Summary of the Period of his Life in Western Australia*, typed monograph, Irma F. Wigley, RGSSA; copy in the Gwalia Museum, Gwalia, Leonora; also Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/1, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988.

²¹ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 20 January 1915; *Herald of Wales*, 23 January 1915; Gwynfynydd gold mine is discussed in detail in chaps. 3 and 4.

Leader news columns, as well as comment in his ‘Rambler’ column, were devoted to defending Trew against an alleged libel printed in the *Western Mail*.²²

Hall’s contributions to the *Herald of Wales* regularly praised the contribution to Swansea life of the Reverend J. E. Manning, minister at the Swansea Unitarian church, and it is clear that he held in high regard the clarity and logic of Manning’s sermons. Hall prided himself on his own lucidity and reasoning, and was always very aware of the Unitarians’ concern for rational thought.²³ Hall also was regarded as a leading light in the Unitarian Church Literary and Debating Society, which had high status in Swansea at the time, and though he often attended the Anglican Church in the Western Australia goldfields, the church that his family chose to attend in Adelaide was that of the Unitarians. However, the main influence on his life from 1888 onwards was undoubtedly William Pritchard Morgan, who will feature prominently in subsequent chapters.²⁴

Hall certainly had an amazing capacity for work. Apart from his initial employment in Swansea as a ship’s chandler’s clerk, in order to write reports for the *Swansea Journal*, he would have had to attend a great number of council and other meetings around Swansea, probably as one of those that Aled Jones describes as an ‘enthusiastic amateur correspondent’.²⁵ On graduating to full-time journalism in 1883, he would have had wide reporting duties in addition to his own column. He then moved up to sub-edit and then edit the *Cambria Daily Leader* under the managing editorship of Samuel Williams, while continuing to file reports and continuing to produce his weekly ‘Rambler’ column for both the *Herald* and *Leader* for the remainder of the decade.

The same energy with which he threw himself into journalism was also to be

²² *Cambria Daily Leader*, 14 May 1883. See also chap. 2.

²³ *Herald of Wales*, 26 September 1885, among many others. Hall’s columns frequently echo the logical basis of the Unitarian credo outlined below: Biblical Unitarian web-site ‘<http://www.biblicalunitarian.com/articles/logic/logical-fallacies-employed-in-trinitarian-theology>’ (accessed 18 Jan 2013). God specifically says in Scripture that He wants men to come to a knowledge of this truth. If Christians are going to do so, then there must be an appreciation of what is logical and what is not. Otherwise, nonsense masquerading as spiritual truth will go undetected and the quality of people’s lives will suffer as a result of believing it’.

²⁴ Pritchard Morgan and his relationship with Hall is discussed in chap. 3 and subsequently.

²⁵ Aled G. Jones, *Press, Politics and Society: A History of Journalism in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1993), p.33.

reflected in his extensive and rapid exploration activities in Australia from 1895 onward. By the time he would set out with Pritchard Morgan for Australia, Hall was on the verge of 40 years of age, well established in London life, and the successful company secretary of a gold-mining company.

It is inconceivable what this sudden change to living in Western Australia in 1895 must have meant to Hall, the middle-aged city dweller. Temperatures in the Great Victorian Desert (as the north-eastern goldfields of Western Australia, his main area of exploration, were initially known) were overwhelming in summer, frequently well in excess of 45°; though in winter, cold could be bitter. Hall travelled, with his faithful colleague, Alexander Wilson Castle, in a four-in-hand waggon through arid country, often infested with spinifex, frequently over untracked wildernesses or, if they were lucky, with a ‘camel pad’ marking the way, on a punishing schedule of lease inspections.²⁶ They carried all their own equipment and food; his granddaughter Irma Wigley recounted that they used the ‘buggy’ for shelter at night and from the daytime heat.²⁷ Yet Hall’s energy appears to have been boundless, and certainly as we shall see time and again in later chapters, his commitment to the north-eastern goldfields was total, both in his quest for gold, and in his activities to foster community and social development, reflecting his previous Welsh political viewpoints.

In his Swansea days, Hall was always an out-and-out supporter of the Welsh Radical Liberals. His columns regularly backed Lloyd George and his supporters, and stressed the common interests of workers and employers. In this he was cast very much in the Radical Liberal mould of the 1880s and 90s, which Russell Deacon describes.²⁸ As will be shown in the discussion of Hall’s journalism in the next

²⁶ *Western Ancestor, Journal of the Western Australian Genealogical Society*, March 1988, pp.18-19, plagiarized by Coral Haymet from the work of Deborah Watkins, Trigg, Western Australia, the grand-daughter of Alexander Wilson Castle and the daughter of Dora Castle, who is referred to in the article as if she were the mother of the plagiarist—a copy of the original unpublished family history monograph was obtained personally by the author of this thesis from Deborah Watkins, March 2012.

²⁷ Ms/Hall, G.W., RGSSA, *George William Hall 1855-1915: Summary of the Period of his Life in Western Australia*.

²⁸ Russell Deacon, ‘The Slow Death of Liberal Wales 1906-1979’, *Journal of Liberal History*, no. 49 (Winter 2005-6). Deacon considers that Liberals were seen as supporting working-class political aspirations, such as disestablishment of the church in Wales, and repeal of the anti-trade union law. Conversely, they were also considered to be capitalist supporters, with the free trade views

chapter, though he displayed a strong social and community conscience, he was definitely not a socialist or Labour supporter of the English variety. Certainly one Australian source credited him as having been chairman of the Gower Labour Association.²⁹ This association in 1888 worked with local unionists, Liberals and Cymru Fydd to elect David Randall, who described himself as the ‘Welsh nationalist, Labour and Liberal candidate’.³⁰ However, no concrete contemporary evidence is available of Hall's role in this. He inclined towards what was later characterised as Welsh ‘Lib-Lab’.³¹

Ieuan Gwynedd Jones typifies the Lib-Lab MP effectively in the *Glamorgan County History*:

The Labour Party (in Wales) in contrast had its origins within, and was organically part of Welsh nonconformist Liberalism. Lib-Lab Members of Parliament, like Mabon, were in effect undifferentiated Liberals. They spoke the language of Liberalism, and their first spoken language was Welsh. They shared a vocabulary, responded to the same rhetoric, did not believe in class conflict, but preached identity of interest between the classes and between Capital and Labour. In industrial relations they favoured conciliation and arbitration, and advocated strong unions in order to create a fair share of the wealth the men they were representing were creating.³²

Jones description in the above paragraph echoes Hall's views frequently expressed in his ‘Rambler’ column, as well as his statements on social and employment matters in his later period in Western Australia.

His *Cambria Daily Leader* columns also showed his support, like so many of the radical Welsh Liberals, for Church of England disestablishment and disendowment, and Home Rule for Ireland. In addition, by the end of his Swansea

of Liberal industrialist MPs such Sir Alfred Mond and David Davies, helping to gain the anti-socialist vote.

²⁹ Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797/6, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988; Cutting from an unidentified newspaper, collected by Frank Hall, circa 1900-1; Ms/Hall, G.W., RGSSA.

³⁰ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 19 March 1888.

³¹ See Martin Wright, *Wales and Socialism, 1880-1914: Political Culture and National Identity*, Ph.D. thesis, Cardiff University, 2011 for a discussion of the growth of socialism and its relationship to Radical Liberalism in Wales. He refers (pp.30-31) to a debate on Socialism at the Swansea Unitarian Literary and Debating Society in 1887, chaired by Rev. Manning, which undoubtedly George Hall, as a regular contributor to that forum, would have attended.

³² Ieuan Gwynedd Jones, ‘Franchise reform and Glamorgan Politics, 1869-1921, Glamorgan Society 1780-1980’, chap. 3 in vol. 6, *Glamorgan County History*, Prys Morgan (ed.) (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1988), p.62.

period, Hall's politics had certainly become more significantly left-wing. He inveighed against the inaction of the local Swansea and Gower Liberals, warning them in the most direct manner in his column that the Conservatives, much as he disliked their policies, were infinitely more active than the Liberals in election matters. The column space that he provided for several working-men's columnists in his last two years at the *Cambria Daily Leader* reflected what continued thereafter to be his lifetime concern for the lot of the working man. This certainly held good when he became an Australian entrepreneur; when he stood for the Western Australian Legislature he still represented himself, paradoxically, as being in sympathy with Labour principles.

One of the questions raised in this thesis is Hall's sense of Welsh identity. In this it can be said that he was in many ways unrepresentative of the Welsh diaspora in Australia. Despite his leading a mining crew of Welshmen there in 1895, and his public image as a sociable 'Celt', he, his family, relationships, attitudes and activities were atypical of the kind of Welsh social groupings in Australia that a number of other studies have examined.³³ He represented a different social class, mixed with the highest social and political groupings and with many different nationalities, was much more of an internationalist, and one who for much of his mining career related far more to London than Wales as his base. Another such who was closely linked with Hall was Welsh mining entrepreneur Alfred Morgans, whose career in Australia in many ways paralleled that of Hall, only with more success. He was a member of the Legislative Assembly whose leader was Sir John Forrest, and Hall mixed on equal terms with both. When Forrest accompanied by Morgan made an official visit to Malcolm and the Sons of Gwalia in 1899, the *Inquirer's* correspondent stated that 'Mr Hall, although not a Welshman, has lived for many years in Wales speaks the language like a native and has all a Welshman's love of music'.³⁴ The article then referred to the excellent singing group that Hall had assembled in the goldfield, which entertained them and commented, 'It is not often that one hears good music on a goldfield, but it is to be obtained at Mount Malcolm and the glee club is in great requisition at all local functions'. We have already deduced that he regarded himself

³³ Apart from the extensive body of writing by Bill Jones, see also Robert L. Tyler, *Identity and Culture Maintenance: the Welsh in Ballarat and Sebastopol in the second half of the nineteenth century*, Ph.D. thesis, Melbourne, 2000; Lewis Lloyd, *Australians from Wales*.

³⁴ *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 21 April 1899.

more as a transnational, a ‘Welsh’ member of the British Empire and a citizen of the world. His words at a later event in Australia were:

We are protected by the power of England’s greatness and we are surrounded in our work by men who are loyal to the British Throne, who revere the traditions of our race, and who are as proud of our Imperial nationality as any man who dwells in England today.³⁵

There is certainly no awareness here of any sense of Welsh identity; rather, his allegiance is to ‘our’ English race. Yet we know already of the strong attachment he had for Swansea, and in his final years it was to the Gwynfynydd mine, in North Wales, scene of his first involvement in gold-mining, that he returned.

In many ways, the general public perception of him as a ‘Welshman’—as it was of Pritchard Morgan—was completely stereotypical; the outgoing Celt who was gregarious, and talkative and loved singing. Nowhere is there any indication of any support by Hall for the ‘Cymru Fydd’ movement, which in addition to home rule advocated a strong awareness of a cultural identity. Certainly no sense can be found in his words or activities of any commitment to a Welsh national identity or to Welsh language and culture, more than there was in many other Welsh public figures of his period. Maybe we should not expect that. Indeed, as we will see later, his views on the Welsh language are somewhat dismissive.³⁶ Yet when an English writer who claimed to have lived in Wales generalised derogatorily on the Welsh public’s attitude to disestablishment, Hall’s defence was immediate:

Mr Bentley is an admirable representative of a class of Englishmen who skim through Wales and consider themselves competent to speak on any and every matter relating to the Principality. They have probably taken to wear Welsh flannel, and during their peregrinations, have possibly tasted Welsh mutton, and consider themselves inspired on Welsh subjects generally, when in reality they know no more about Wales or Welshmen than the sheep grazing on the hills.³⁷

³⁵ *Sons of Gwalia Complimentary Dinner to George W. Hall*, souvenir booklet, p.27, Hotel Cécil, London, 28 March 1898, author’s private collection; Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/5, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988.

³⁶ See chap. 2.

³⁷ *Herald of Wales*, 19 June 1886.

Though Welsh journalists at this period were critical of many European countries' imperial attitudes, they saw the British Empire in general as a benevolent force. As Aled Jones and Bill Jones say, 'Currents of Empire flowed through the Welsh popular press of the nineteenth and early twentieth century in vigorous but often complicated ways'. Their study suggests that imperial thinking played a significant role in the creation of a modern Welsh world view, which saw Welsh expansion as being within a British dimension—regarding British colonial power as a 'benign constitutional monarchy'.³⁸ In an interesting parallel, one of the most influential figures in Welsh and English language journalism in Wales at the time, O.M. Edwards, while promoting Welsh pride in their history and attempting to develop a united Welsh spirit, still took a positive overall view of the empire, considering that the Welsh should form their colonies within the British empire rather than beyond it, and advocated 'the time will come for Wales to play its part in the civilization and governance of this world' by participation in the imperial civil service.³⁹ Leader of 'Cymru Fydd', T. E. Ellis, together with Lloyd George, were both among the major Welsh advocates of a 'liberal' British empire, to which both Pritchard Morgan and Hall would have subscribed. Hall to all intents and purposes, though always avowing his 'Celtic' identity, regarded himself specifically as a British rather than Welsh colonial entrepreneur.

In conclusion we can say that Hall was in many ways an ambiguous character; despite the aspects in the following chapter that illustrate his forthrightness and directness of personality, his attitudes towards Wales and the Empire, and towards his own sense of birthright and identity are complex.

³⁸ Aled G. Jones and Bill Jones, 'Empire and the Welsh Press' in Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain. Reporting the British Empire c.1857-1921* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2004), p.75.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.86, 89.

Chapter 2

Hall the Newspaper Man in Swansea, 1880-90

This chapter concentrates on Hall's contribution to Swansea and South Wales newspapers in the decade to April 1890. It also considers what his role as a columnist and journalist tells us about Hall himself, his philosophies, his political and religious beliefs, his view of society and community in Wales as it was, and what he considered that society and community should be. As well as enhancing our understanding of Hall himself, his work as a newspaper man adds to our knowledge of the history of the press in Wales in this period. Aled Jones, who has written so extensively on the newspapers of Wales, gives much attention in his writing to what he describes as 'the two great morning papers' of this period in Wales, the Cardiff-based *South Wales Daily News* and the *Western Mail*, yet has virtually nothing to say about the Swansea evening paper, the *Cambria Daily Leader*.¹ Yet this paper predated and sometimes outsold both the others, and was, to south-west Wales during this decade, its main organ of the daily press.

The chapter argues that within the confines of a traditional 'provincial' newspaper, Hall's own writing illustrates stylistic aspects of the 'New Journalism' that was transforming newspaper influence and circulation in this period. It also expands our knowledge of the development of the *Cambria Daily Leader*, the first daily paper in Wales, within the context of an emerging popular press in Wales, and its role in responding to, and shaping, the political and social landscape.² The chapter helps fill a glaring gap in two historiographies, in that it considers the role of the *Cambria Daily Leader* and *Herald of Wales* in the Welsh Radical Liberal cosmos of the decade, under the guidance of Hall as journalist and editor, and also fills a significant omission in knowledge about the Welsh newspaper industry during this period.

¹ Aled G. Jones, *Press Politics and Society*, p.26, refers to the new opportunities that were grasped for daily papers in Wales during the 1860s and 1870s, but exemplifies only from the *Western Mail*, launched in 1869 and the *South Wales Daily News* in 1872, while ignoring the *Cambria Daily Leader*. He briefly notes the latter newspaper's establishment in 1861 on p.2 and does not mention it again until it is sold, in 1899.

² Aled G. Jones, 'The New Journalism in Wales' in Joel Wiener (ed.), *Papers for the Millions, The New Journalism in Britain, 1850s to 1914* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1988) p.166.

Hall's work as a journalist in Swansea was one of his major formative influences. Through it he found his distinctive 'voice', and learned many of the communication methods later manipulated to good effect in 'booming' his mines in the Australian press and in London. It was also the period that brought his first contact with Pritchard Morgan, and set the tone for a partnership lasting 27 years, until his death. Whether it was Hall's skill as a journalist that influenced Pritchard Morgan, or whether it was the 'Welsh Gold King' (as Morgan was known) who led Hall is immaterial. Between them, they formed a potent partnership of like minds, both being bon viveurs who delighted in music and company, and with both having significant capacity for venture and self-publicity. They both delighted in using the press to foster their own ends, and in particular, to 'sell' their gold companies to a public eager to invest in potential El Dorados, first in Wales, and later in other countries.

As I indicated previously, it was in 1880 that the 25-year-old Hall, while in the employ of Thomas Trew, started contributing an occasional column as a part-time correspondent to a weekly newspaper, the *Swansea Journal*. His column, concentrating initially on council and school board business, soon moved also to cover any local affairs and matters of concern, coloured by the writer's taste and interests; indeed, its equivalent in modern terms would be the on-line blog.³ One early example of his column forecast the result of the Swansea South Ward local election, showing clear partiality for the short-statured Griffiths, 'the Little Captain', over the 'Morrison Giant', Glasbrook, a frequent butt of his commentary over the coming years. He observed 'size and ability do not always go together'; Hall, it should be noted, was himself quite short in stature. He also commented on the rumour that Adelina Patti had replaced lover Nicolini with a French new paramour, and recounted a performance he had attended at the New Theatre Swansea.⁴

Initially his column was entitled 'Notes by a Swansea Rambler'; within three months this graduated to 'Notes by Rambler', as he became better known. No doubt he was not paid much, if at all, initially. Editors often relied on 'penny-a-liners' such

³ *Swansea Journal*, 11 September 1880, was Hall's earliest recorded column, though both an earlier two-part report of a visit to Hereford, and August contributions to an 'odds and ends' column, reflect his style of writing.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2 October 1880.

as Hall, and rates for such journalism were notoriously poor. Indeed, editors themselves were poorly paid, with some sub-editors receiving as little as £1.10s a week, but such a column was also a route to the prospect of more permanent work for a capable writer.⁵ Early in 1881, his column was eclectic in its choice of subjects, commenting on a current building society fraud case (remarking on the oddity that the defendant had attempted to make amends by leaving all his property in his will to the building society he had defrauded), a missing elephant, the current British war against a Basuto rebellion, and the massive new Swansea dredger.⁶ A paragraph on some recent burglaries referred to ‘ingenious individuals whose ideas of *meum et tuum* seem to be somewhat vague’ and attributed lack of previous occurrences to a police force ‘remarkable for their intelligence, size and strength, and... for their corpulency’, suggesting any apprehended housebreaker would be ‘crushed by sheer weight or smothered by fat’. Mockery of the size, and torpidity, of the Swansea police was to be a recurrent theme of Hall’s writing.⁷

Hall clearly attracted strong feelings among the paper’s readership, feelings that enabled him to show his wit and logic. One column started:

There are many persons in the neighbourhood of Swansea who do not care about this column, nevertheless they read it weekly. One individual has written to me that he strongly disapproves of the style in which it is written: I am sorry to hear that. I write this column simply to please him. I would ask him to come and write it himself only that I feel confident that some iniquitous idiot would write to say how much better he could do it, and that would annoy a sensitive person like my correspondent.⁸

Another column responded vigorously to an attack by another paper’s columnist, who had compared the pages of the *Swansea Journal* to Dickens’ *Etanswill Gazette*. Of him Hall commented, ‘Jacob, my boy be careful that you are not poisoned by the exhalations of your own slime’ and speculated tongue-in-cheek whether this was the same Jacob, the ‘hero of the reprint age’ who used to plagiarise other papers’ lead stories in his own column.⁹

⁵ Aled G. Jones, *Press Politics and Society*, p.32-4.

⁶ *Swansea Journal*, 1 January 1881 and 8 January 1881.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 26 February 1881, among others.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 19 February 1881.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 26 March 1881.

His style and choice of subjects attracted much public attention, not least because of his readiness to tackle controversy and the way he challenged the comfortable balance of the town's Liberal and Conservative leaders by his left-leaning Liberal views, which often echoed those of Swansea MP Lewis Llewelyn Dillwyn.¹⁰ It was not surprising, therefore, that he was taken on in 1883 by Samuel Williams, owner of the *Cambria Daily Leader*, the first daily newspaper in Wales, established in 1861, which, with its partner weekly paper, the *Herald of Wales*, was increasing its circulation in the Swansea area. The *Cambria Daily Leader* was important as one of only four daily Welsh newspapers of the 1880s, and the only one serving South-West Wales. It was published and printed at the heart of Swansea's business district, at the Island Chambers, 63 Wind Street. By the time Hall joined it was already a well-established Liberal mouthpiece for Swansea and West Wales. Hall's journalistic prowess, particularly the widespread success of the 'Rambler' column, contributed significantly to the growing circulation of Williams' papers. Though accurate circulation figures for newspapers of the period are notoriously difficult to ascertain, early in his time at the *Cambria Daily Leader*, 'Rambler' claimed that sales on occasion, such as a special war supplement, reached as high as 10,000 copies and that, 'Newspaper reading like many other things is a habit that grows upon a person the more it is indulged in'.¹¹

Williams took Hall on initially as what was later described as a 'journalistic novitiate' but during his seven years with the papers, he graduated to the post of managing editor of the *Daily Leader*.¹² His rise earned him praise from all his staff and made him a significant public figure in Swansea.¹³ The change of employment also involved a change in fortune, and a move by 1886 from the lodgings above the shop at 26, New Oxford Street to Chapel Street, in the seaside village of Mumbles. By the time he left Swansea he was installed in a grand house, Bredwardine Cottage,

¹⁰ Kenneth O. Morgan, 'The Challenges of Democracy' in Ralph A Griffiths (ed.), chap. 4, *The City of Swansea: Challenges and Change* (Alan Sutton, 1990, Stroud) gives an overview of the Swansea political map at this period.

¹¹ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 2 February 1885. See also Aled G. Jones, *Press, Politics and Society*, p.95 for the difficulties of ascertaining accurate circulation figures.

¹² *Ibid.*, 12 April 1890.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 17 April 1890.

Church Park, Mumbles, an even more select location.¹⁴

The *Cambria Daily Leader* was, in most ways, a traditional paper. It carried a solid front page of advertisements—one of its major sources of funding. Like so many other papers, much of its news content was bought in, or rephrased from other newspapers or agencies, particularly reports on matters abroad and in the rest of Britain. It relied on its own staff to report local events and meetings, with many of the issues raised, such as the toll charges on the North Dock bridge, being reported over the whole five-year saga.¹⁵ It also reported sporting events and had a growing correspondence column. However, its columnists had been intermittent and transient, and in the years before ‘Rambler’ they had concentrated on rather mundane local minutiae together with snippets gleaned from national British newspapers.¹⁶ They expressed few of their own views.

To establish what Hall brought to the *Daily Leader*, and how writing for it revealed his own character and opinions, it is necessary to consider the town’s position at that time. Swansea was still often regarded as the most important industrial and shipping centre in Wales, but the rivalry with the booming upstart, Cardiff, was growing. It competed unsuccessfully with Cardiff for the establishment of the University College for South Wales, and Cardiff’s increase in money and influence at this time was spectacular.

As Aled Jones emphasises in his seminal volume on the Press in Wales, journalism was closely associated with the processes of change in Welsh society, and reflected as well as influenced that change.¹⁷ This was the era when for the first time a wider reading public, including a significant working class population, demanded increasing information through a regular newspaper. The passing of Foster’s Education Act in 1870 ensured a far more literate general public over subsequent

¹⁴ *Swansea Directory, 1890*, published by the *Cambria Daily Leader*. Hall would probably have written the extensive and well-written introduction. His directory entry shows he had clearly not forgotten his birthplace, Bredwardine, in naming his new home.

¹⁵ *Herald of Wales*, 18 August 1884, 19 and 24 September 1885, 23 January 1886 among others. The charge was finally abolished in 1889.

¹⁶ ‘Welsh Notes’, *Cambria Daily Leader*, 16 November 1882, ‘Metropolitan Notes’ and ‘Neath Notes’, *Cambria Daily Leader*, 17 November 1882 and ‘Echoes and Re-echoes’, *Cambria Daily Leader*, 21 November 1882, for example.

¹⁷ Aled G. Jones, *Press Politics and Society*, p.10, and throughout.

years, who were imbued with a desire to read. It was a period where knowledge became far more dispersed and accessible, with newspapers, the growth of railways and the telegraph system all reflecting ready and rapid communication and availability of news. In the period from the middle to the end of the nineteenth century 'the newspaper was repositioned from a marginal to a central place within English print culture'.¹⁸ It was also a period where political use of the press, and the link between its control and achievement of political power became much more explicit, with owners of newspapers, or individuals such as editors, able to exert significant influence. Welsh Radical Liberal, David Lloyd George, first elected in 1888, was one of the earliest politicians not only to realise the power of the press but also use and influence it by taking control of a group of newspapers, and actively courting other newspaper editors and proprietors. Aled Jones quotes James Magarch's view that Lloyd George was the first prime minister to discover Fleet Street and the first to 'proceed deliberately and cynically to establish his personal ascendancy over the press', though it could also be argued that Disraeli had been the first to do so.¹⁹

The *Cambria Daily Leader* and *Herald* were solid in their support for the Liberal cause long before Hall joined them. Owner Williams ensured that his paper reflected the views and political composition of a town where the town council and the school board were predominantly Liberal. The Swansea MP, Lewis Llewellyn Dillwyn, a wealthy local industrialist, was a committed Radical, supporting agricultural reform, disestablishment and Irish Home Rule.²⁰ Copper magnate Henry Hussey Vivian, the member who gained the additional seat allocated to Swansea District under the Reform and Redistribution Acts of 1884-5, was of the same ilk. In contrast in Cardiff, the Bute-backed and Conservative *Western Mail* dominated the media, though challenged by the other major daily Cardiff newspaper, the Liberal-supporting *South Wales Daily News*.²¹ The latter paper, offered a broader and maybe more traditional Liberal platform than the *Cambria Daily Leader*. However, North Wales Radical MP T.E. Ellis contributed to its columns before his election to

¹⁸ Aled G. Jones, *Powers of the Press: Newspapers, Power and the Public in Nineteenth Century England* (Aldershot and Vermont: Scolar Press, 1996), p.2.

¹⁹ Aled G Jones, *Press Politics and Society*, p.137.

²⁰ Kenneth O, Morgan, 'The Challenges of Democracy', p.53.

²¹ Aled G. Jones, *Press Politics and Society*, pp.128-130, chronicles the establishment of the rival *Western Mail* and *South Wales Daily News* in Cardiff.

parliament, and its London Correspondent was no less a person than the influential proponent of the 'New Journalism', T. P. O'Connor, at the time a Liverpool MP.²²

A tremendous store of George Hall's writing is available over the decade from 1880 to 1890. It gives us frequent insights into him and his views, views that to a considerable degree echoed his community commitment and political activities in Swansea, and presaged his opinions in Australian newspapers and his community activities in the north-eastern goldfields.

Hall's columns, for the *Swansea Journal* and for both of Williams' papers, exhibited three characteristic features. The first was the prolific nature of his writing. His early part-time work often covered two full columns, and when he became a full-time journalist and editor, his weekly column would have been only a small part of his journalistic contributions to both the weekly and the daily paper. The second feature was his intensely personal style of writing, so different from that of the old-fashioned journalists of the period. These, though committed to recording faithfully what happened and what was said, and who considered it their duty to give a balanced and broad view, seldom made any personal comment on the proceedings, or if they did, avoided the forthright and often controversial nature of Hall's column. Hall would always give his own views of what had transpired in society, religion and politics, and in Swansea in particular, commenting and colouring not only on what was said, but how it was said. His style at times appeared almost conversational, or a stream of thought; however, this conceals a control and balance that demonstrates his capability to shape his prose to the best effect. Even where he stated that he had little to say, that did not stop him—in fact an early *Swansea Journal* offering opened with, 'Everything is so terribly quiet in town that I scarcely know what to write about'.²³ He echoed Eneas Sweetland Dallas' description of Parthian bowmen who shot 'their most effective arrows as they flew, without pause for either forethought or reflection'.²⁴

²² Aled G. Jones, *Press Politics and Society*, p32,38; Joanne M. Cayford, *The Western Mail 1869-1914: A Study in the Politics and Management of a Provincial Newspaper*, Ph.D.Thesis, Aberystwyth, 1992, p.19 for a treatment of the role of the *Western Mail* at this time. She stresses that 'Fundamentally politics were the main stimulus of newspaper production and the democratic potential of the press was, if reluctantly in many cases, recognized.'

²³ *Swansea Journal*, 2 October 1880.

²⁴ 'Popular Literature, the Periodical Press', *Blackwood's Magazine*, Jan 1859, cited in Aled G. Jones, *Powers of the Press*, p.4.

Yet his range of erudition, reflecting his wide reading, allusions and control of sentence structure, ensured that the quality of his writing was never in doubt.

He was clearly a man of firm and definite opinions; ‘I’ certainly featured large in Hall’s vocabulary. An 1888 *Leader* column opened:

The criticisms of my friends always receive from me the attention to which they are entitled. If I err in matters of fact—a somewhat rare occurrence—I am always pleased to be corrected; but some people seem to have embraced the idea that unless a man happens to agree entirely with them in all their opinions, he has no right to contribute to a newspaper [...] if they imagine their surreptitious carping and underhand jugglery will in any way influence me towards their mode of thinking, provided of course they indulge in that luxury—a thing I much question—they are sadly mistaken [...] I shall never shirk controversy, nor abstain from advocating what I believe to be right. We do not, cannot, all think alike.²⁵

The third characteristic of Hall’s columns was his well-established support for the Liberal cause to which has been referred—though in his case, he was more radical in tone than that of the town in which he plied his trade. Linked to this was his sense of social justice, particularly for the working man and the ordinary citizen. Hall was always motivated by the desire to ensure that what he wrote about should benefit his fellows in Swansea and Mumbles. In 1883, his very first column for the *Cambria Daily Leader* stated that in the *Swansea Journal* he had made his column:

a weekly reflex of the history of this town, my object being... to encourage what was beneficial to the community and to hold up to reproof all that was pernicious.²⁶

He referred to one of England’s honoured heroes from Nelson’s ‘Victory’ who died at the age of 100—in a workhouse; another column attacked the ‘swell gentility’ who did not pay their bills to poor vegetable growers, ‘ostentatiously charitable, privately mean’ and suggested that despite their snobbish show, if they paid all their bills they would ‘not have two pennies to rub together’.²⁷ The social conscience which was his guiding light in Swansea would also manifest itself throughout his time in Australia.²⁸

²⁵ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 24 July 1888.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 10 February 1883.

²⁷ *Herald of Wales*, 20 October 1883; 1 December 1883.

²⁸ See chaps. 4 and 6 particularly.

With his direct and often conversational style, frequently humorous, at times blunt and controversial, he was never afraid of tackling and challenging the dull, the conventional and the humdrum, particularly those in official positions, or representing establishments that were traditionalist or lacking imagination. His writing, when set alongside examples of his later speeches reported in Australian and British newspapers, shows clear transfer of those debating skills that he honed in the Unitarian Literary and Debating Society. Indeed, in his columns can be found the stylistic foundations for his later speeches at celebration dinners and company general meetings, together with the many interviews at the peak of his fame. In Swansea, his accounts of public meetings, in addition to what he reported verbatim, were complemented by his ability to create a sense of place and occasion through his vivid prose, often with a literary, religious or classical allusion, reflecting his early education and continued wide reading. He combined his wit effectively with his knowledge of Pilgrim's Progress to illustrate Swansea's problems in an early *Herald of Wales* column:

If there is a scarcity of corn we can congratulate ourselves on a plentitude of another commodity—or rather incommmodity. I mean mud. Christian may have managed to get through the Slough of Despond. Had he been compelled on a wet day to wade through some of the Swansea streets, I question whether he would not have preferred to remain in the City of Destruction.²⁹

The traditional and provincial *Cambria Daily Leader* evidenced very few of the features of 'The New Journalism' found in that pioneer London publication, W. T. Stead's *Pall Mall Gazette*, such as the use of striking headlines, interviews, maps and illustrations.³⁰ However, it was the significant stylistic element of the New Journalism that Hall introduced. This in its directness and personal tone reflected a characteristic emphasised in T. P. O'Connor's seminal analysis of the New Journalism as being a 'revolution':

The main point of difference is the more personal tone of the new methods...I

²⁹ *Herald of Wales*, 24 February 1883. See also examples *passim* in the 'Rambler' columns of the *Swansea Journal*, *Herald of Wales* and *Cambria Daily Leader*.

³⁰ Joanne M. Cayford, *The Western Mail 1869-1914*, pp.190-6 has an effective analysis of the features of the New Journalism in Wales as exemplified in the *Western Mail* (Cardiff) and *South Wales Daily News*.

hold that the desire for personal detail of public men is healthy, rational and should be yielded to. Statesmen are not ciphers without form or blood or passion. ... Behind every speech and every action there is the man—a weak man or a strong man, high or low, generous in purpose or base in intrigue.³¹

O'Connor concluded that:

... a journal, whatever its views, should express them with the greatest lucidity and in the strongest and most striking manner it can command [...] The newspaper is not read in the secrecy and silence of the closet as is the book. It is picked up at the railway station, hurried over in the railway carriage, dropped incontinently when read. To get your ideas through [...] there must be no mistake about your meaning: to use a somewhat familiar phrase, you must strike your reader right between the eyes.³²

Hall's characterized his people, not just reported on them; his descriptions of individuals of all levels of Swansea society are full of wit and detailed observation, often with an element of scathing comment where merited. He was very ready to use his column to campaign on local issues—clean streets free of mud, clean drinking water and sanitation in Swansea and Mumbles were among his local hobbyhorses. He often risked the wrath of those who held traditional views on religion and Sunday Observance.³³ His later headlining campaign on behalf of Pritchard Morgan in the Merthyr election of 1888 had the zeal of a proselyte. His words certainly reflected Stead's claim concerning himself and T.P. O'Connor '...we broke the older tradition and made journalism a living thing, palpitating with actuality, in touch with life at all points'.³⁴ The 'Rambler' column, even during its early *Swansea Journal* days, stood out as something different. Though the *Herald of Wales* and the *Cambria Daily Leader* did not stretch to illustrations, and Hall's column may not have evinced the

³¹ T.P. O'Connor, 'The New Journalism', *New Review* 1 1889, cited in *Victorian Print Media: a Reader*, Andrew King and John Plunkett (Oxford University Press 2005), p.361. Also cited by L. Brake, 'The Old Journalism and the New' in Joel H. Weiner(ed.), *Papers for the Millions* (Greenwood Press, New York 1988), p.8. O'Connor, as editor of the radical newspaper, the *Star*, founded in 1888, was arguably the first major proponent of the 'New Journalism.'

³² T. P. O'Connor, 'The New Journalism', *New Review* 1 1889, cited in *Victorian Print Media: a Reader*, p.365.

³³ *Herald of Wales*, 10 May 1884, where Hall defended Mahomet against a non-conformist 'weighty preacher' the Rev. Dr. Rees, saying 'I must say I never listened to greater twaddle in my life'; *ibid.*, 21 June 1884, ridiculed the 'Blue Ribbonites' of Swansea's Sunday Observance Society for opposing band music in Cwmdonkin Park; *ibid.*, 5 June 1886 he attacked the Ulster Loyalist Association for passing themselves off as non-political, among numerous other examples.

³⁴ W. T. Stead, 'Character Sketch, Mr T.P. O'Connor MP', *Review of Reviews*, XXVI (1902), cited in John Goodbody, '“The Star”, its Role in the Rise of the New Journalism': Joel Weiner (ed.), *Papers for the Millions* (New York, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1988), p.145.

typographical features that made O'Connor's *Star* so striking, in stylistic terms it can be convincingly argued that Hall's writing represented one of the earlier manifestations of New Journalism in Wales. It certainly paid off with significantly increased popularity and consequent circulation for the *Cambria Daily Leader*.

Some of his first columns for the paper had been a series of attacks on the *Western Mail*, which, during his former employer and mentor Thomas Trew's absence in the USA, had accused Trew libellously of having left Swansea to avoid the debts of another merchant who had absconded.³⁵ Hall took the part of his former employer, against the Cardiff newspaper; this was the first of his many brushes with the *Western Mail*, the Conservative organ backed by the Marquis of Bute.

Hall's role with the *Cambria Daily Leader* and *Herald of Wales* brought him into regular contact with the majority of the most influential of Swansea dignitaries, including not only Thomas Trew, but also Alderman, (and from 1885, Gower MP), Frank Ash Yeo, Swansea Liberal grandees Sir Henry Hussey Vivian and Lewis Llewelyn Dillwyn and Conservative notables David Llewellyn and Charles Bath. His column recounted frequently his attendance at the most important local functions of the day, as he mixed not only with Swansea's Liberal-dominated political and social leaders, but with their Conservative opponents. He was highly regarded by all parties.³⁶

Though a great number of the *Daily Leader* and *Herald*'s news reports bear his stylistic stamp, and his pseudonym on his own column is later attributed to him by name, his name is not given in these papers, for one reason. As an editor, and a journalist reporting the events, the newspaper tradition of anonymity was still strong in Swansea journalistic circles.³⁷ Hall's journalism may have been 'New' in its style, but a provincial newspaper was far from becoming modern enough to use by-lines.

³⁵ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 30 May 1883 and *Herald of Wales*, 2 June 1883. Hall denied that Trew had ever been in partnership with the failed Ley's Potato Merchants who had disappeared with debts of £20,000, and prophesied libel action when Trew returned from abroad.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 7 April 1890. A typical contribution was the Mayor of Swansea's appreciation of the 'Rambler' column and recognition of George Hall's 'honesty and impartiality of motive' at the presentation of a testimonial to him on his departure from Swansea. The meeting was chaired by W.W. Moore, editor of the old enemy, the *Western Mail*.

³⁷ Joanne M. Cayford, *The Western Mail 1869-1914*, pp.161-163 provides a full discussion of the problem of anonymity of journalists.

There are one or two clues that point to his participation in public life. A study of some of the *Daily Leader* reports of meetings of the Swansea and the Gower Liberal Associations, particularly at the time of the campaign for David Randall, elected as Liberal and Labour-endorsed MP for Gower, recorded the presence at several meetings of a certain 'J.G. Hall'. This gentleman may have been Dr James Griffith Hall, a well-known local surgeon. But the Swansea Scientific Society in 1886 and 1887 lists a J.G. Hall, with an address at *Cambria Daily Leader* office, as one of its members, and the following year records G.W. Hall of the *Daily Leader* of the same address as a member (but no mention of J.G. Hall).³⁸ It takes little imagination to realise that the enunciation of 'JG' together can be argued to represent 'George' Hall's name. Also, Hall's distinctive style of writing was a clear characteristic of much of the *Cambria Daily Leader*'s output over the years and there is no doubt that the great majority of its articles which supported matters such as disestablishment and the Irish question, or which came out for Liberal candidates, had his stamp on them throughout the latter part of the decade.³⁹ His paper's proprietor, Samuel Williams, in contrast, was not noted for the interest or fluency of his less frequent columns.⁴⁰

Despite the growth and popularity of the daily paper, it was still to the traditional weekly newspaper that most people turned. Yet, as Aled Jones says, success in journalism was measured by the speed of a reporter's promotion from the weekly press to a daily paper.⁴¹ The 'Rambler' column made the transition immediately, printed first in the *Leader*'s weekly sister paper, the *Herald of Wales*, and then reprinted the subsequent week in the *Cambria Daily Leader*. It featured in both papers throughout Hall's period as journalist and editor. The column frequency varied; in many years it appeared every week, but when major events such as a large trial or election demanded Hall's journalistic commitment elsewhere, its recurrence

³⁸ *Transactions of the Swansea Scientific Society*, 1886-87, 1887-8 and 1888-9 (membership lists), Swansea Library Rare Books collection. The Swansea Scientific Society was a prestigious body that included among its members MP Lewis Llewellyn Dillwyn, a Fellow both of the Linnaean Society and the Geological Society.

³⁹ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 28 January 1888, for example. An extensive 'sketch' contributed exceptionally under his 'Rambler' by-line, chronicles colourfully a meeting in support of Sir George Trevelyan.

⁴⁰ *Herald of Wales*, 29 December 1888 manifests the turgidity of Williams' 'Sweyn's Eye' column, compared with the 'Rambler' column in the *Cambria Daily Leader* the previous day.

⁴¹ Jones, Aled G., *Press Politics and Society*, p.43.

could be less regular. Hall's column was clearly well received by the readership, and excited frequent responses in the correspondence column of the paper. It shows him to have been always ready with a riposte to correspondents on local matters. He took no prisoners, using the column to excoriate or praise public institutions and personalities. The objects of his attentions ranged widely. They included the Salvation Army and the Established Church equivalent, the Church Army, whom he characterized as 'unaspiring howlers' and against whom he took a particular mocking exception. He objected to dull and boring preachers, many of whom he found in the Church of England. He also castigated the Blue Ribbon Temperance movement, the Sunday Observance Society and the Young Conservatives' Primrose League, though saying that he admired what he considered the latter's misplaced energy and spirit.⁴² Individual councillors suffered under the lash of his pen. He campaigned positively for a University College, and after this was awarded to Cardiff, he switched his support to campaign for 'a good technical college in our midst'.⁴³

Echoing T. P. O'Connor's desire for 'lucidity', he showed himself a master of logical argument, used to good effect to dismantle several of these opponents; to a significant degree his writing showed the effect of Rationalist Unitarianism on his thinking, characterized by highly intellectual and humanistic attitudes, and an ability to dissect an argument. For example, Walter H. Webber, a Sabbatarian, suffered severely from his pen in the March 1885 period following a debate at the Unitarian Literary and Debating Society on 'Sunday Observance', in which Hall and Webber had been on opposite sides. Webber subsequently availed himself of the *Daily Leader* correspondence column to attack Hall.⁴⁴ He in turn used his 'Rambler' column to demolish Webber's hypothesis that businesses that opened on a Sunday failed to make a profit, concluding his dismissal with:

⁴² *Cambria Daily Leader*, 25 May 1885.

⁴³ *Herald of Wales*, 17 and 24 March 1883; *The Cambrian*, 3 February 1882. This event is also well covered in Neil Evans, 'The Welsh Victorian City: the Middle Class and Civic National Consciousness', *Welsh History Review*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June 1985), pp.371-2, and in more detail in Gwyn A. Williams, 'Odd Man In' in Gwyn Jones & Michael Quinn (eds.), *Fountains of Praise, University College, Cardiff, 1883-1983* (Cardiff: University College Cardiff Press, 1983), pp.5-11.

⁴⁴ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 13 March 1885, second letter in a series to the newspaper by Walter H. Webber. In this he accuses Hall of misrepresenting his arguments and of 'indelicate and unscrupulous' behaviour. 'Swansea Notes by Rambler' in both the *Herald of Wales* and the *Cambria Daily Leader*, 21 March 1885 give some of Hall's subsequent responses.

The latter part of Mr Webber's letter is unintentionally amusing. I am, he says, 'indelicate and unscrupulous'. I acknowledge that delicacy is not one of my strong points—a fact that Mr Webber will probably realize more fully as this controversy progresses—but the charge of unscrupulousness comes with bad grace from a man who has exhibited the wriggling sinuosity of Mr Webber ... Of course we hear the old complaint. I am not combatting my opponent but attacking the Christian religion. So says Mr Webber. This is not argument, but the characteristic cry of cowardice that always escapes men of my opponent's calibre. His letter commences with regret and ends with insult and abuse. Mr Webber may be able to warble *alleluia*, but he cannot argue.

The exchanges with Webber provided fodder for Hall's column for several weeks, with the former's letters appearing more and more ridiculous.

Despite Webber's accusations, Hall was very definitely a practising Christian, though accounts of his church attendance in his column show that he was eclectic in his religious affiliation. Hall seems to have been originally of Anglican background, and certainly on occasion attended the Established Church in Swansea, as his column attests, but he frequently also attended nonconformist services, in both English and Welsh chapels. It may well be that many of these visits were in the call of duty, since the *Cambria Daily Leader* carried many accounts of notable sermons, and Hall's columns often referred to the content of such sermons, but one denomination clearly attracted Hall above others, namely the Unitarians. Certainly when one examines his writing, one sees evidence of the analytic Unitarian view of society reflected in Finseth's study:

Unitarians placed a premium on stability, harmony, rational thought, progressive morality, classical learning, and other hallmarks of Enlightenment Christianity. Instead of the dogma of Calvinism intended to compel obedience, the Unitarians offered a philosophy stressing the importance of voluntary ethical conduct and the ability of the intellect to discern what constituted ethical conduct. Theirs was a "natural theology" in which the individual could, through empirical investigation or the exercise of reason, discover the ordered and benevolent nature of the universe and of God's laws.⁴⁵

The intellectual and humanistic beliefs of Unitarianism that a person's moral convictions echo their political acts chimed also with Hall's Liberal beliefs and his lifelong commitment to social improvement. In an 1884 'Rambler' column quoting a

⁴⁵ Ian Frederick Finseth, *Liquid Fire Within Me: Language, Self and Society in Transcendentalism and early Evangelicalism, 1820-1860*, M.A. Thesis in English, University of Virginia, August 1995, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma95/finseth/thesis.html>, accessed 21 January 2014.

Hereford Journal report of the Hereford Church Sunday School Association, Hall referred to his ‘personal experience in teaching in both English and Welsh Sunday Schools’.⁴⁶ His high regard for the Reverend Manning, minister of the Swansea Unitarian Church, was obvious from several of his columns.⁴⁷ Hall’s most comprehensive obituary, in the *Herald of Wales* and *Cambria Daily Leader*, stated:

Mr Hall... took a keen interest in local matters and identified himself with several of [Swansea’s] literary and social societies. For several years he was a prominent member of the Swansea Unitarian Literary and Debating Society, the Reverend J.E. Manning at that time being its president. Mr Hall frequently read interesting papers on questions of the hour, these occasions being marked for their crowded attendance.⁴⁸

From his earliest writing, he had shown particular support for disestablishment and disendowment of the Established Church, a solution to the Irish question, and surprisingly modern views on suffrage. At a time (1884) when suffrage had only just been extended significantly as a result of the Reform Acts of 1884 and 1885, he advocated universal suffrage in towns (though in his column he speculated that the rural population would need some years to catch up). All men paying annual rental of £10 or holding property or land worth £10 could register but Hall also noted the inconsistency of ‘lodger enfranchisement’, while women property owners were still not allowed to vote.⁴⁹ Hall’s perception of women’s rights, which he saw in accordance with his Unitarian logicity as a matter of equality, compare interestingly with the views of the Suffrage movement at that time, which saw this as an issue of difference.

Two years later, his account of the Swansea Debating and Literary Society meeting on ‘Electoral Rights for Women’ showed the constancy of his standpoint on this question; in reporting the speeches during the debate which supported female suffrage, he chose to highlight the absurdity that the Queen, a single woman,

⁴⁶ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 31 July 1884.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 14 February 1885 for example. This details with obvious approval Manning’s lecture of the previous Sunday evening, which continued a series of analyses (and demolitions) of the Church of England’s 39 Articles.

⁴⁸ *Herald of Wales*, 23 January 1915 - Hall’s obituary was an extensive front-page story in this newspaper, and second page leader in the *Cambria Daily Leader* three days earlier.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 18 September 1884.

governed the country, but that women were still denied an electoral voice.⁵⁰ Interestingly, Hall did not choose to give any column space to the opposing speakers' argument.

His views on the Welsh language might have raised some modern eyebrows but were consistent with his era.⁵¹ Though he gave many accounts of his attendance at Welsh chapel services and praised many Welsh sermons, he bemoaned the fact that over half the population of Wales would not be able to read the accounts of these luminaries, as they would be published only in the Welsh language press. Thus he concluded they would be better preaching in English.⁵² Earlier he had fulminated against the second-rate writing he saw in certain Welsh language periodicals and 'the same system of toadyism and back-scratching that ... prevails at hole-in-the-corner *Eisteddfodau*(sic).⁵³ In another column he referred to a '...movement on foot to teach Welsh in elementary schools. I don't think it is calculated to bring beneficial results'. He considered that the main use of Welsh was for teachers to explain when children did not understand English, but the need for this was now much less frequent. 'I don't regret having learnt the ancient tongue of Wales [but] outside the principality, it is almost useless and had practically no commercial value.' He averred they would be more profitably employed learning French or German, and that they would be better off with a 'thorough grounding in English and instructed in elementary science.'⁵⁴

Hall's Liberalism, and its movement over the decade towards a more left-wing orientation was, as stated previously, in the tradition of the development in Wales, rather than following the Socialist League and ILP emphases in England. By 1888, it is clear that Hall, and the *Daily Leader* with him, were moving steadily in a Lib-Lab direction. Though in Wales the growth of labour and union activism was reflected in developments in the political press, with short-lived papers such as the *Workman's*

⁵⁰ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 27 October 1886; Ryland Wallace, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Wales 1866-1928* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press 2009) deals with the matter extensively.

⁵¹ Geraint H. Jenkins, *The Welsh Language and its Social Domains 1801-1911* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff 2000), Social History of the Welsh Language Project series, vol. 5, provides a discussion of the diversity and complexity of attitudes towards the Welsh language in this era.

⁵² *Herald of Wales*, 15 September 1883.

⁵³ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 5 January 1884.

⁵⁴ *Herald of Wales*, 19 September 1885.

Advocate/Amddiffynnydd y Gweithiwr and *Y Gweithiwr Cymreig*, only the Aberdare-printed *Tarian y Gweithiwr*, which started in 1875 had any long term success in presenting a Lib-Lab stance, so the *Daily Leader*'s support would have been invaluable to worker activists. Aled Jones in a study of Victorian Trade Union newspapers states that:

By the late 1870s the venture inaugurated in 1871 to create a national system of locally-based newspapers had come to an end. Not one of the systems' newspapers had met with overwhelming success, and in the general context of the contemporary newspaper press, their presence was ephemeral and marginal.⁵⁵

It can be argued that the *Cambria Daily Leader* made every effort over the last years of the 1880s to ensure that it provided a suitable platform for working men's views. This was despite the fact that Hall's paper represented in many ways the capitalist press that J.T. Morgan, until then editor of the *Merthyr Times* and *Western Observer*, had sought to counter with his 1873 launch of the Labour and trade union paper, the *Workman's Advocate*.⁵⁶ Indeed, Hall's view often echoed the working class reforms that J.T. Morgan, together with Staffordshire potter and editor William Owen in his *Labour Press Miners and Workers' Examiner*, voiced. Apart from Hall's own contributions in the 'Rambler', he ensured that a number of worker columnists were afforded regular columns in the *Daily Leader* including 'Twm Tinman' and 'A Tin Worker's Girl', while another new radical columnist 'Morgannwg' was also given a frequent spot. 'Morgannwg' used his column frequently to promote trade union membership, and to advertise the newly produced *Industrial Times* newspaper, a successor to those that Aled Jones describes in the 1870s in Wales and elsewhere. Samuel Williams, the *Daily Leader*'s proprietor, must have also supported the leftward trajectory of Hall's philosophy. This was reinforced by the outrage of 'Rambler' in an 1889 column at the directors of the Army and Navy Stores, who at their AGM declared a profit of over £90,000 on £60,000 capital, but reduced staff wages by £2181 while increasing their own fees by £1340.⁵⁷ Hall had also warned Swansea and Gower Liberals against their inaction, comparing their complacency

⁵⁵ Aled G. Jones, 'Workmen's Advocates, Ideology and class in a mid-Victorian Labour newspaper system' in J. Shattock & M. Wolff (eds.), *The Victorian Periodical Press: samplings and soundings* (Leicester University Press/Toronto Press 1982), p.312.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.305-6.

⁵⁷ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 10 April 1889.

with the Conservatives, who had just built a new Swansea club. In his words, ‘There is little doubt that a species of Liberal Conservatism ... is getting popular in Swansea and Gower’. By this period his radical leanings were clearly not in tune with the current torpidity and self-satisfaction of the Swansea Liberals.⁵⁸

Hall’s interest in mining and in particular gold-mining, was also evidenced at this period. He urged that Dr Morgan’s new Technical Institute in Swansea be designated as a School of Mines. He also produced an article on the Gogofan [in modern times known as Ogofau or Dolaucothi] goldmines in Carmarthenshire for the *Leader*; his column outlined their background from Roman mining excavations onwards, and quoted contemporary experts such as Readwin and Hancock on the feasibility of reopening the mines.⁵⁹ These mines, of course, represented one of only two historically important areas for gold-mining in Wales.⁶⁰ The other was in Meirionnydd in North Wales and the thesis deals with this at some length in the next chapter. The remainder of the chapter, however, concentrates on the next episode in Hall’s journalistic career, the 1888 by-election. Hall’s role in this is vital to our understanding of how he became so involved with William Pritchard Morgan, a major step that over the following two years totally transformed his career.

In late August 1888, Hall devoted the majority of his ‘Rambler’ column to a moving tribute to Henry Richard, the ‘Apostle of Peace’, whose death had caused a parliamentary by-election in Merthyr.⁶¹ He was clearly a man Hall admired, not least because of the congruence of many of their political and social views. Merthyr by this time elected two MPs, of whom the senior following Henry Richard’s death, though only newly elected earlier in that year, was wealthy Liberal coal owner D. Alfred Thomas. The local Liberal Association had promised a working-man candidate to succeed the much loved ‘Apostle of Peace’, in what was one of the safest

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 24 August 1888.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 28 April 1888.

⁶⁰ George W. Hall (no relation to the subject of this thesis), *The Gold Mines of Meirioneth* (Gloucester: Griffin Publications, 1975), its extensive revision in the 1988 edition, and *Metal Mines of South Wales* (Gloucester: Griffin Publications, 1993) pp.39-48, are the most dependable guides to Welsh gold-mining overall. The first, in particular, is the fullest and most accurate treatment available of the Meirionnydd/Merioneth gold belt and of the Gwynfynydd mine.

⁶¹ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 24 August 1888.

Liberal seats in Britain, but failed to agree on a candidate. Pritchard Morgan took advantage of this schism in the Liberal Association ranks to put himself forward, and though he stated he would stand down if a Labour working-man's candidate could be found, used the disarray and disputes in the Association, and the lack of agreement on a candidate, to remain in the contest, as an 'Independent Gladstonian Liberal'. The last-minute Association selection was Ffoulkes Griffiths, a Welsh-speaking lawyer imported from London, who had the support also of local ministers of religion. The co-operatively owned Aberdare-based *Tarian y Gweithiwr*, a radical newspaper, was viciously opposed to Pritchard Morgan, and threw its support behind Griffiths. However, as this compromise carpet-bag candidate had not been selected until late September, Pritchard Morgan had a free run in the meantime.⁶² It was alleged that he had the backing of the Chambers of Trade, Licensed Victuallers and employers' associations, and the Conservatives' tacit support, but Morgan's platform oratory, and frequent presence during the previous month around the public houses and pitheads of Merthyr and Aberdare, must have also swayed many working-class voters.⁶³

The selection of a candidate for both the Merthyr by-elections of 1888 have been well covered by Charmley's *Llafur* article and by Kenneth O. Morgan, but there has so far been no treatment of the *Cambria Daily Leader*'s role in these elections, in which Hall was the key participator.⁶⁴ Dispatches from the Merthyr by-election headlined in the *Daily Leader* throughout September and October showed the progress of Hall's increasing involvement with Pritchard Morgan. At the end of August 1888, he had travelled by train to Aberdare, the town of his youth, to cover the by-election, his telegraphed reports appearing under the by-line 'Our Special Correspondent'. Initially he stated that he would reserve his opinion on Morgan until he had heard him speak, but by the end of the Oddfellows Hall, Dowlais meeting of 4 September 1888, Hall had clearly been totally won over:

⁶² *Tarian y Gweithiwr*, 25 October 1888, described Morgan as '*wedi gwyngalchu ei hun o'i goryn i'w draed â rhyw fath o radicaliaeth*'. ['Whitewashed himself from crown to toe with some kind of radicalism'. All further translations from Welsh are by the author of this thesis unless otherwise stated].

⁶³ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 26 September 1888. David Morgan, miner's agent at Dowlais, and hitherto an aspirant candidate himself, suggested to Hall on the train that Pritchard Morgan had 2000 Dowlais supporters.

⁶⁴ Gerard Charmley, 'Working Class Solidarity? Miners and the Merthyr Boroughs By-Elections of 1888', *Llafur*, vol.10, no.2 (2009).

As a speaker Mr Morgan has few equals among the rank and file of the members of the House of Commons. He possesses a musical and penetrating voice, his diction is admirable, his language is cultivated though forcible and exceedingly well chosen, and his style is simple, effective and unpretentiously earnest. He has all of the instincts of the orator ... Both for matter and manner, Wales may be proud to look to the 'Gold King' as one of her leading political speakers.⁶⁵

In Hall's election literature when he stood for the State Legislature in Western Australia, he was described as Morgan's agent in this election, and a prominent contributor to his victory, and this story is repeated in his obituaries. However, Morgan's agent was in fact a miners' agent, J. John Vaughan, and Hall, who was reporting the campaign, featured nowhere on his platforms. Nevertheless, it is clear that his role in reporting on the campaign was invaluable in presenting Morgan in the most favourable light, especially given Hall's gift for vivid and arresting description. Hall was ever-present in the Merthyr constituency throughout September and October, staying at the Castle Hotel, where Morgan had also ensconced himself, and writing positive accounts of Morgan's breakneck campaign, which dominated the *Cambria Daily Leader's* news for almost two months. All the while, adjacent *Daily Leader* columns damned with faint praise the candidature and meetings of the official Liberal candidate, Ffoulkes Griffiths. This support was vital to Morgan, who, as an old newspaper man himself would have been well aware of the positive impressions which Hall's support engendered. The Liberal *South Wales Daily News* had come out in favour of Griffiths, even though it had initially supported Morgan.⁶⁶ The great majority of the Welsh language press was fervently anti-Morgan. For much of the campaign, Sonley Johnson, the *South Wales Daily News* editor, boycotted Morgan's speeches and reported only Ffoulkes Griffiths' meetings.⁶⁷ Cardiff's *Western Mail*, was grudging and half-hearted towards the 'Gold King' and repeated many of the insinuations about him; Pritchard Morgan alleged that paper had described him as a 'rotten egg'.⁶⁸ The Welsh language *Tarian y Gweithiwr*, was scathing about him,

⁶⁵ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 5 September 1888.

⁶⁶ *Western Mail*, 26 October 1888, referring to the *South Wales Daily News's* '...fulminations of our Radical contemporary, directed against a man whom a few weeks ago it covertly caressed. Mr Pritchard Morgan...'.

⁶⁷ It must be admitted that though Hall did report on Ffoulkes Griffiths' meetings, his comments were uniformly unfavourable; from his first reference to Griffiths' 'anonymity' (*Cambria Daily Leader*, 26 September 1888), to, for example, his inability to hold an audience, and the low number of meetings he held. (*Cambria Daily Leader*, *passim* through October 1888).

⁶⁸ *Western Mail* (Cardiff), 10 October 1888.

and the *South Wales Daily News* even accused him of having offered himself previously as a Tory candidate in Newport.⁶⁹ With D.A. Thomas, Mabon, Tom Ellis and *Cymru Fydd* also opposing him, the unqualified and extensive support of the *Cambria Daily Leader*, the only other major English language daily paper serving the Aberdare and Merthyr areas, was vital.⁷⁰

Hall's reporting over the two-month period of the campaign, throughout which he communicated with his office by telegraph, was, even by his prose standards, astonishing in its sustained vigour and descriptive capabilities. Its verbatim account of everything said by Morgan showed how good Hall's shorthand skills were. However, it also contained graphic reporting of which T.P. O'Connor would surely have approved; a vivid pen picture of the reactions of the listeners, and considerable lively and entertaining detail about the repartee and the scuffles that occurred, generally casting Morgan as the hero of the hour and the outcomes of his meetings as triumphal successes. Morgan's own energy, quotable oratory and commitment to the election campaign made Hall's reporting job easier. The Swansea journalist recounted one occasion when Morgan turned up to speak to a group of miners at the beginning of the shift, and then returned to address them as they came up from the mine at the end of the shift; Morgan would often speak at up to six gatherings a day. At another meeting Hall gleefully described how a 'well-known rough [...] employed by the Griffiths sites' who was disrupting Morgan's meeting was 'tenderly lifted out of the hall [...] with the least possible noise and did not injure him in the least until they got him on the highway, and then [...] they untenderly laid him on the road and played football with him from the Drill Hall to Giles and Harrup brewery'.⁷¹

Hall's reports on Morgan's behalf in each day's edition often covered three full columns of small print—well over 2000 words. His coverage was far more enthusiastic, and far more detailed, than anything that any rival papers attempted on either side of the contest. At one stage Pritchard Morgan (through Hall) accused the

⁶⁹ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 29 September, 1888; *Cambria Daily Leader*, 17 October, 1888; *Tarian y Gweithiwr*, 25 October 1888; *Western Mail* (Cardiff), 1 October 1888, also referred to the *South Wales Daily News* allegation that Pritchard Morgan had canvassed the Newport Conservative Association on the chances of standing as a candidate.

⁷⁰ Kenneth O. Morgan, 'The Merthyr of Keir Hardie' in *Modern Wales: Politics, People and Places* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), p.277-8.

⁷¹ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 24 October 1888.

South Wales Daily News of boycotting his meetings, and reporting only those of Ffoulkes Griffiths, who was described memorably as ‘a briefless Baptist barrister in search of a billet.’⁷² The same accusation of partiality could certainly have been leveled in reverse against Hall. At the height of the campaign he was forced to withdraw a particularly personal attack on the character and physical appearance of Sonley Johnson, the editor of the *South Wales Daily News*, when he stated, ‘the gruff-voiced missing link, who claims credit for the Cardiff Liberal Newspaper, has made himself the laughing stock of the whole community’.⁷³ The same attack on Johnson commented that the *Daily News*’ leading article of the same date attacking Pritchard Morgan was ‘as far from the truth as the ex-Reverend Sonley Johnson’s appearance is from the lines of beauty, and heaven knows, as do all who ever set eyes on the Editor of the *South Wales Daily News*, that this is a very extreme statement’. The *Western Mail* of 20 October deplored the personal attack by ‘scurrilous personalities on a Swansea Liberal newspaper’ and Hall retracted in the *Cambria Daily Leader* of the same day. Even in retracting, he did so in a way that excoriated the hypocrisy of the *Western Mail* in uncharacteristically defending the editor of its rival newspaper.⁷⁴

Morgan duly swept to victory, amassing 7,149 votes to Griffiths’ 4,956, and Hall recounted the victory celebrations in the pages of the *Daily Leader*, exulting that the old Liberal Caucus in Merthyr had been smashed.⁷⁵ His involvement in the election did not end with Morgan’s victory. For three further days he remained in Merthyr and contributed columns to the *Cambria Daily Leader* by telegraph, narrating many of the lively background anecdotes of the election. He chronicled the wife who had locked her Griffithsian husband in his room and who had tried to vote on his behalf. When refused, she asked, ‘Why can’t I vote as well as pay his bills?’. He told of the illiterate Irishman who when asked his name insisted it was ‘Pritchard Morgan’, and another Irishman who after voting, asked a Morgan sympathiser where on the ballot paper Morgan’s name could be found. When told it was at the bottom, he

⁷² *Cambria Daily Leader*, 26 September 1888.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 19 October 1888.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 20 October 1888.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 27 October 1888.

said ‘Thank God! It’s all right then’. When questioned why he hadn’t asked the returning officer, he said that he didn’t want them to think he couldn’t read.⁷⁶

It is noteworthy that for well over a month after the election the ‘Rambler’ column was missing from the *Cambria Daily Leader*, and Hall’s characteristic ‘voice’ was absent from other news articles as well. However, an explanation was forthcoming in the last ‘Rambler’ of the year, when he noted that in subsequent editions he would be writing a series of articles on the visit he had already made to the North Wales goldmines. Prior to the election, Pritchard Morgan had ensured massive publicity for himself through newspaper reports of his rich strike at the Gwynfynydd goldmine in North Wales. During the election campaign he had obviously invited Hall to visit Gwynfynydd, and Hall’s increasing involvement with Pritchard Morgan had occupied his time. In February 1889 there was an extensive account of his visit to the mine near Dolgelley [Dolgellau], including using his own background knowledge to provide considerable geological detail and description of mining practice—he showed that he was either a very quick learner, or already well familiar with the practical as well as the theoretic aspects of mining.⁷⁷

Throughout 1889, though columns by the new left-leaning contributors ‘Pole Star’, ‘Twm Tinman’, ‘Morgannwg’ and ‘Tin Worker’s Girl’ appeared regularly, ‘Rambler’ was more notable by his absence than occurrence. One rare ‘Rambler’ column recounted the meeting of the South Wales Liberal Federation where T. E. (Tom) Ellis MP gave a speech which Hall considered most instructive, and where Pritchard Morgan also spoke extempore.⁷⁸ ‘His [Morgan’s] speech was well phrased and full of point, but he did not let himself “go” and soar into oratory as he does sometimes when before his constituents’, were Hall’s observations—he had heard plenty of such oratory the previous October.⁷⁹ It can be confidently stated that Hall at this stage was becoming much more involved in Pritchard Morgan’s mining as well as his political activities. The latter would have been well aware, following Hall’s visit

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1 November 1888.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 16 February 1889.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 23 February 1889. ‘When one listens to Tom Ellis, one feels that a man is speaking who not only knows what he is talking about, but is terribly in earnest and feels what he says. Still he is not an orator, and I don’t think he will ever develop into one’.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 23 February 1889.

to Gwynfynydd, of his geological knowledge, and took steps to recruit him as a manager in his London company, Pritchard, Morgan and Company.

It must have come as no surprise, therefore, when in early 1890, a replacement columnist on the *Daily Leader* introduced himself to the readers and praised 'Rambler' for his contribution of the past years.⁸⁰ 'Et Cetera' in announcing his debut as a columnist regretted 'that its birth should signal the death of another and brighter column'. In paying tribute to Hall (the first time in which his name appeared in a column in over a decade's writing) he said 'for years readers of this journal have been privileged to ramble in the delightful company of my versatile friend Mr G.W. Hall, but now he is wandering to 'fresh woods and pastures new'...Translated suddenly though he be from the calm shades of country journalism to the thronged area of London Commerce, I have no doubt that that he will acquit himself right worthily.' He added ' Mr Hall was a successful journalist, and a successful journalist generally performs whatever he attempts'.

When he left the post of editor of the *Cambria Daily Leader* in Swansea on 5 April 1890, a public subscription was raised to present him with a mantel clock and an engraved case of cutlery.⁸¹ It was stressed at the meeting that this was not a common occurrence and that contributions had flowed in, a tribute to Hall's popularity in the town. Various city notables including John Roberts, the Chairman of the School Board and Swansea's mayor, Alderman Freeman, paid tribute to George Hall's public and newspaper roles, emphasizing the regard in which he was held by public men and his fellow journalists.⁸² The *Cambria Daily Leader* of 7 April 1890 recounted how W.W. Moore, editor of the old adversary, the *Western Mail*, spoke warmly of him at the presentation and paid tribute to the honesty that Hall showed in his editorial notes even when he disagreed directly with Hall's own views. He stated 'his best side had always been shown to his brethren in the press'; obviously he had forgotten Hall's attack on Sonley Johnson. John Roberts stated he had met Mr Hall 'not only in his capacity as journalist, but also as a scientist, for Mr Hall was undoubtedly one of the best amateur geologists in the locality'. To this was added a

⁸⁰ *Herald of Wales*, 8 February 1890.

⁸¹ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 7 April 1890.

⁸² *Herald of Wales*, 12 April 1890.

presentation by the staff of the *Cambria Daily Leader* on 12 April, wishing Hall success in his new role as a manager for Pritchard Morgan's enterprises in London.⁸³ However, it is interesting that while the previous week's paper describes him as 'managing editor', the farewell by the staff described him as sub-editor; one can surmise therefore that the general editor was Mr Samuel Williams, the proprietor, but that Hall did most of the everyday journalistic and sub-editing work.

Having examined his newspaper columns we can now consider what they tell us about George Hall as a person, as a journalist and editor and consider how he had negotiated the transition from a 25-year-old shipping clerk to a respected press figure. Like many an aspiring journalist, he was continually educating himself, and very ready to learn from a great number of sources; his first employer in Swansea, Thomas Trew, Swansea's Liberal politicians with whom he mingled, a range of other public figures, including the police and militia whose functions he attended and the School Board, many churches and other organisations, notably the Unitarian Debating and Literary Society.

His own averred political position was, as he described himself, an 'arrant Radical', and furthermore one whose radicalism progressed and became more socially conscious and worker-orientated as his period as editor developed.⁸⁴ Furthermore though he did attempt to retain balance in his role as a columnist—he claimed that he kept his political views out of his columns—it is always abundantly clear what his views were, and which party he favoured.⁸⁵ Yet, he was as ready to attribute praise to political opponents, people like Tory notable, Charles Bath, whom he regarded as principled and honest, as he was to radicals.⁸⁶ He could be scathing, particularly when he wrote about the Young Conservatives and the establishment of their Primrose League.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, he had also welcomed the coming of a branch of the Primrose League, as he hoped that this would in itself prompt more Swansea Liberal activity in reaction. He was outspoken on many occasions about what he saw as the

⁸³ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 14 April 1890.

⁸⁴ *Herald of Wales*, 17 January 1885.

⁸⁵ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 19 January 1885.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 28 December 1888 carries Hall's glowing tribute to the late Charles Bath's kindness and generous disposition.

⁸⁷ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 19 January 1885, 'The league may in the future rusticate in Hades as far as I am concerned, as I wholly disagree with its objects.'

lack of radicalism and lack of movement in Swansea and Gower Liberal town councillors of the old school.⁸⁸

We know that he was a member of the prestigious Swansea Scientific Society. We know also that he travelled extensively on reporting duties around the circulation district of his papers, from Cwmavon to Neath and Glyn Neath, from Hirwaun to Merthyr and Pontypridd. We know that he enjoyed living in Mumbles, but had strong views on the stench from inadequate sewage in that village, and on the Mumbles council's inaction on a number of matters. He campaigned frequently through his columns on public sanitation in the Swansea area, the need for improved clean water supplies and better roads.⁸⁹ His column suggests he always had an eye for a pretty girl—as was also implied in his later divorce hearing—and would often comment about them in his column, saying that Swansea, in his view, was well supplied. A keen swimmer, he objected to what he considered 'the carping of that concatenation of English prudism, Mrs Grundy' on ladies and gentlemen bathing together'.⁹⁰ Yet despite his advocacy of female suffrage, his views on the innate nature of literary style and the superiority of men's literary skills suggest that full equality was still a long way away in his mind.⁹¹ We know that he had a keen sense of humour and was prepared to fight his corner in his column, his verbal duels with individuals and organizations such as the local vicar or the Church Army sometimes lasting many weeks.

His reporting covered a range of topics from the local to the national and international, from Swansea's sanitation to town and national elections. When Joseph Chamberlain, had visited a Liberal banquet in Swansea, Hall in his first 'Rambler' column for the *Herald of Wales* contributed a pen portrait of the then Liberal leader. He quoted an overheard conversation between two local businessmen that

⁸⁸ Kenneth O.Morgan, 'Democratic Politics in Glamorgan 1884-1914', *Morgannwg*, vol. 4, 1960, pp.19-20, refers briefly to the influence of the *Cambria Daily Leader* on public opinion at elections, and to its critical attitude to the Swansea Liberal hierarchy.

⁸⁹ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 24 July 1884. 'I wish to call the attention of Dr Ebenezer Davies to the water supplied to the town. It may be highly economic in the sense that it is both meat and drink; but what we want [...] is pure drinkable water [...] On looking at it when the sediment had settled, it presented [...] one mass of life, full of animalculae'.

⁹⁰ *Herald of Wales*, 16 June 1883. Hall described how when bathing in France 'ladies have pretty tight-fitting bathing dresses, instead of the antiquated bed-gowns that are in use here'.

⁹¹ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 26 April 1888.

Chamberlain was ‘a man of immense wealth, it is his money that enables him to subsidise all the newspapers’. Hall commented, ‘Of course this was supposed to explain the secret of Mr Chamberlain’s popularity and power’.⁹² Hall’s verdict was that ‘Mr Chamberlain is not an orator—at least not a platform orator—but he is a thorough master of that cool, clear, fluent and incisive style so popular in the House of Commons’.⁹³ Hall no doubt hoped his own oratory was at least as good, and it would certainly appear that he was much more of a ‘platform orator’ himself. As I shall show, his speech at the dinner to launch the Sons of Gwalia Company, which is covered in a future chapter, is a supreme example of his oratorical style. Similarly his presentations, as quoted in the press, to Annual General Meetings of the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency (to which I refer in the last three chapters) and at various other banquets, demonstrate his considerable ability to communicate and to convince an audience.

There is no doubt that Hall was a successful newspaper editor and a popular columnist. In 1886, he claimed that the circulation of the *Cambria Daily Leader*, recounting the execution of two murderers, one in Swansea and one in Cardiff, was nearly 35,000 over the two days, and he was proud to say there could be few provincial evening papers that could match this.⁹⁴ Later claimed figures went even higher though the previous proviso on the difficulty of assessing accurate circulation figures still applies.

Finally, the thesis argues that Hall’s writing gave him the outlet that he needed for his outgoing personality. In his column, he gave articulation to his own political philosophy and gained a public confidence and status, which he later used to good effect. While the *Cambria Daily Leader* showed no external aspects of the New Journalism, Hall himself evinced a direct and personal style of writing, which echoed the best of that newspaper revolution in London. His newspaper was the basis of his power; to persuade, to influence and to sell an idea quite as much as to sell a product. This stood him in good stead not only in Swansea, but later in London and Australia.

⁹² *Herald of Wales*, 10 February 1883.

⁹³ *Ibid.* 10 February 1883.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 13 March 1886. Six months later (*Herald of Wales*, 4 September 1886), a copyright suit by the *Western Mail* against the *South Wales Daily News* alleged that the circulation of the latter paper was only just over 13,000.

By 1890, he was at the zenith of his influence in Swansea and clearly needed new challenges. He was a singularly successful press figure, well-liked, full of bonhomie, whom even his opponents respected, and in some cases feared. He had over the previous two years seen another prospect of a wider application for his hitherto underused geological capabilities. So what prompted this 34-year-old man, in the prime of his press career and successful social life, to change course totally, and to ally his future to an adventurer who, for all his status as an MP and his riches as a mine owner, had, to say the least, a chequered and controversial record? One can but speculate as to what drew Hall, a man of such capability and talent with the written and spoken word, to change his field of activity so completely. The perennial problem of an editor's low wages contrasting with his enhanced social position may well have been the deciding factor; also, the demands of his high-maintenance wife Martha Mary, a somewhat spendthrift lady, probably contributed.⁹⁵ But I would argue that the main motivation was to achieve a wider stage than Swansea provided. The camaraderie and dynamic of the relationship which had been established during the election at the Castle Hotel in Merthyr, between the two extroverts, the mercurial and witty Pritchard Morgan and the polished public performer, George Hall, also had a great deal to do with it. We hear more of this in the next chapter. In any case, London called, and Hall answered.

⁹⁵ Aled G. Jones, *Press, Politics and Society*, p.55-59, considers the relative rates of pay and social status of journalists; *The Register* (Adelaide) 25 July 1902, confirms that Mrs Hall's overdraft in 1899 had been £552 despite her allowance of £100 a month.

Chapter 3

Hall and Pritchard Morgan - kindred souls

This chapter provides a discussion of Hall's life from 1890 covering the first period of his formal co-operation with William Pritchard Morgan. It covers the relationship that built up between Hall and Morgan, together with some of the reasons for the partnership, over the period when they first co-operated in London and North Wales, controlling the mine at Gwynfynydd. As outlined in the introduction, Morgan features so large at this point because it is only through Morgan's activities that Hall was visible during this period, whereas during the succeeding Western Australian period, Hall was the pre-eminent public figure. This chapter shows how Hall's original position as a London company manager for Morgan developed through his growing expertise, from being an amateur geologist and lecturer, to practical familiarity and expertise with a working gold mine; or, to put it another way, how, in five years in London, a provincial newspaper editor could be transformed into a 'mining expert'. The chapter discusses his role as Company Secretary of two of Morgan's companies. This was an important period as it introduced him to the relationship between the London money markets and gold-mining investment. It also touches upon later biographical suggestions that during his London period Hall played a role in London's Radical Liberal, or even Labour, politics.

The previous chapter has established that it was in September 1888 that Hall's path first crossed with that of the 'Welsh Gold King', Pritchard Morgan. However, he must have been well aware of Morgan already through their mutual Liberal connections and had written about his mine in his columns. Certainly, by the date of Morgan's election for Merthyr in the 1888 by-election, the editor of the *Cambria Daily Leader* had been transformed into an active and fervent supporter. Though the *Daily Leader* was a Swansea paper, as has been indicated its influence stretched well beyond, up the Vale of Neath and into the Merthyr constituency.

Morgan was well accustomed to manipulating the media already; this chapter, refers to his talent for self-publicity and previous newspaper involvement in Queensland. He and Hall made a well-matched partnership, politically and

subsequently in business, both being considered to be on the worker-orientated edge of Liberalism. Even when they were different, they complemented each other, with Pritchard's business skills and financial connections balancing well with Hall's geological expertise and effective public relations. This relationship is fundamental to our understanding of Hall's developing importance. Therefore, before turning to these developments, a review of Morgan's life and character, and an explanation of the relationship between him and Hall, is necessary.

Pritchard Morgan was always a complex and controversial figure. Son of an Usk, Monmouthshire schoolmaster and lay Wesleyan minister, after starting as a lawyer's clerk in a solicitor's office in Newport, Wales, he emigrated to Queensland, Australia where he was gold-mining in Gympie, while studying law at night.¹ There is, as always with Pritchard Morgan, difficulty in differentiating between the reality and the mythology. One source says that he qualified as a solicitor in Wales and went to Australia at the age of about 20, and another that he had turned up for his law examination in Queensland only to find that the examiner was not present. He is reputed to have subsequently successfully presented his case before the courts of law for his qualification to be recognized, despite not having sat the examination. He became one of Queensland's most noted, indeed notorious, and certainly most well reimbursed, courtroom barristers. He engaged in many legal battles with Sir Samuel Walker Griffith, a fellow Welshman from Merthyr and later Premier and Chief Justice of Queensland. William Watson Price suggests that he had been so successful as a barrister for the defence, that he was then employed, with equal success, by the Queensland courts as a prosecutor.² He also became a newspaper journalist and proprietor, and a lucky speculator in gold mines, particularly the Queensland Mount Morgan mine, and stood twice for the Queensland legislature at Cooktown, losing on one occasion by one vote.³

Throughout his life, Pritchard Morgan was litigious and aggressive in his business dealings. A disputatious and colourful small, tanned monkey of a man, and

¹ *Merthyr Express*, 12 July 1924, and *South Wales Daily News*, 12 July 1924.

² William Watson Price, Biographical Archive, Aberdare Library, pp.53-54 for biographical details of Pritchard Morgan.

³ *Ibid.*, pp.53-54; *Western Champion and General Advertiser* (Barcaldine, Queensland), 28 August 1900.

always a controversialist, he was, notwithstanding, attractive social company, a brilliant platform speaker with a populist touch. He was an excellent pianist who delighted in singing ‘penillion’ [Welsh counterpoint singing] and in his Welsh identity. With public feeling turning against Morgan in Queensland, a series of press attacks and litigation cases ended with his shaking the dust of that colony off his feet in March 1883, and re-settling in London with a reputed fortune from the Disraeli mine, near Charters Towers. He had been described as ‘by a certain class, better hated than any man in Queensland’.⁴ Donald Hector Johnson has doubted the magnitude of Morgan’s claimed ‘fortunes’, and suggests they were on a par with others of his extravagant claims.⁵ In London, Morgan established offices at 1 Victoria Street, a prestigious address at the heart of the City, facing the Mansion House, took up a patent for pyrites treatment, and ‘set himself up as a mining speculator and company promoter’.⁶ He was adept at gaining publicity for himself; in 1886 he attracted attention in Australia and Britain by contributing £600 towards the ‘Patriotic Fund’ to support Queensland soldiers in the Sudan war.⁷ At the Wrexham Eisteddfod in 1888, he presented a conductor’s baton made of Gwynfynydd gold as a prize for the chief choral competition, which attracted considerable useful press attention during the period of canvassing for the Merthyr by-election.⁸

Several of his companies were unsuccessful early on, such as his Gold Ores Dry Reduction Corporation, which was wound up in February 1886.⁹ However, Morgan remained the agent for the Jordan Dry Ores Reduction Process whose patent he had purchased, and which he introduced to gold-mining veteran T. A. Readwin’s Mawddach Mining Company. In 1885 he had bought his way into Readwin’s company, subsequently foreclosing on the latter’s debt to him for building a new tramway in 1886, and forced the company into liquidation for a debt of £2250.¹⁰ Morgan then took over the mine and almost immediately made an extremely rich strike of gold at Gwynfynydd on 11 July, 1887. The total of processed gold produced

⁴ *Otago Times*, 31 December 1887; *West Coast Times* (New Zealand), 4 January 1888; in addition, the *Otago Witness*, 13 January, 1888 has a full, if fanciful, account of his life to that date.

⁵ Donald Hector Johnson, ‘To Silence a Jackdaw Gaggling the Northern Miner’, *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, vol.15, no.6 (February 1994), p.304.

⁶ *Ashburton Guardian* (New Zealand), 31 December 1887.

⁷ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 6 August 1886; *Birmingham Daily Post*, 7 August 1886.

⁸ *Llanelli Star*, 6 June 2012, among others.

⁹ National Archive record, BT 31/3336/19824, Gold Ores Dry Reduction Company.

¹⁰ George W. Hall, *The Gold Mines of Meirioneth* p.88.

in the initial period following this strike was reputed as more than a quarter of a ton, but this cannot be confirmed. He initially kept the find quiet until the following December because though he held the lease, he had no Crown Gold Licence, so much of the gold was probably spirited away in the meantime. He did not endear himself to local magistrates, attempting to get them to pay for constables to guard the mine.¹¹ However, the publicity that he gained in newspapers as a result, and others of his public utterances, such as claiming he was 'entitled' to a parliamentary seat because of his wealth, encouraged a frenzy of speculation, many small investors coming from Wales.¹² By July 1888 he had sold his interest in the Gwynfynydd lease to the newly formed Morgan Mining Company for 70,000 £1 shares and £90,000 cash.¹³ A subsequent restructuring of the New Morgan Mine Company in 1890 was delayed because of the inability to agree what Morgan's recompense would be for surrendering his 70,000 share stake. In the event Morgan's shares were surrendered, and the deal raised an additional £40,000 capital.

In 1890 to 1891 he was pursuing an action against the Crown, which in 1888 had sent in bailiffs and closed down the mine, which Morgan held on lease from Chidlaw Roberts. Since Morgan held no Crown Gold Licence, there was considerable subsequent dispute on the amount of royalties payable, and the method of calculation. He notoriously and incessantly used his parliamentary privilege, and the newspaper publicity it engendered, to argue his case that royalties should be paid on profits rather than on gold produced. Though he argued his own case brilliantly, quoting as evidence two statutes from the period of William and Mary in 1694, the settlement in favour of the crown saw transfer of over 5000 five-shilling shares to the courts before the threat to the mine was lifted.¹⁴ Even afterwards, Morgan kept the argument going,

¹¹ *Timaru Herald*, 8 March 1888.

¹² Alun J. Richards, and Jean Napier, *A Tale of Two Rivers, Mawddach and Dyfi* (Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch 2007), pp.20-23. Richards describes 'Morgan's ability to extract gold from the rocks being more than matched by his ability to extract money from speculators, and doubtless he also had publicity in mind when he famously used the door of the old Dolgellau gaol for his strongroom'.

¹³ National Archive record, BT 31/4140/26701, Morgan Gold Mining Company; *The Gold Mines of Merioneth*, p.91, however, says the sum was £45,000 cash and 145,000 shares.

¹⁴ *The Times*, 20 January 1888 (letters column), raises the royalties issue; *Ibid.*, 25 July 1889 outlines Morgan's case against the Attorney-General, challenging his injunction preventing Morgan from working the (Gwynfynydd) Morgan Gold Mine; *Ibid.*, 16 August, 1890 continues the argument, among many letters on this issue; *The Mining Journal, Railway and Commercial Gazette*, 12 July 1890 gives detail of the arguments in the case; Philip Mennell, *Australasian*

referring to Australia, where no such royalties were raised, and mining was encouraged rather than handicapped. In 1891 he was pressing for Parliament to establish a Minister for Mines.¹⁵

Historians in general have not been kind to Pritchard Morgan. Kenneth O. Morgan is particularly scathing about him, describing him as an ‘itinerant adventurer’ and ‘wayward speculator, half demagogue, half pantaloon’. Certainly the way he manoeuvred his way to victory at the Merthyr by-election had elements of farce, as he, a capitalist chancer, represented himself as a ‘“labour man”, the local boy made good’ and depicting himself on leaflets as ‘a young man, clad in the rough garb of a Welsh collier, a naked candle in his cap, appearing “on behalf of the working classes”, like some refugee from the Victorian music hall’.¹⁶ A colourful study of his activities in Queensland, where he had laid an action against the editor of a rival newspaper, the *Northern Miner*, using a statute from the time of Edward III, characterized Morgan as ‘a shyster, a womanizer and of doubtful professional provenance’.¹⁷ A contemporary Welsh commentator viewed him as a lightweight, and caustically remarked that his parliamentary speech on Disestablishment was that of ‘an advocate who has not carefully read his brief’ and said that as a non-Welsh speaker, ‘a man who had neither *ch* nor *ff* in his alphabet can wield no lasting influence’.¹⁸ Lewis Lloyd in *Australians from Wales* in contrast was relatively gentle to him, chronicling only more positive aspects of his life and restricting himself to commenting he ‘was clearly a shrewd operator’.¹⁹

Why then did the relationship between Hall and Morgan develop so swiftly and last so long? From Hall’s time spent on the 1888 campaign trail, staying with Pritchard Morgan at the Castle Hotel, Merthyr, and his partiality to him in his reports,

Dictionary of National Biography, London, Hutchinson, 1892) p.332 also refers; *Otago Daily Times*, 28 July 1888 has more commentary on the same matter.

¹⁵ *The Mining Journal, Railway and Commercial Gazette*, 31 January 1891.

¹⁶ Kenneth O. Morgan, ‘D.A. Thomas - the Industrialist as Politician,’ in *Modern Wales: Politics, Places and People* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), p.423; Kenneth O. Morgan, *Wales in British Politics, 1868-1922* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1980), footnote, p.91; W. Richard Morgan, *Political History in the 19th-20th Century, Merthyr Tydfil, a Valley Community* (Merthyr Teachers’ Centre), pp.241-43.

¹⁷ Donald Hector Johnson, ‘To Silence a Jackdaw Gaggling the “Northern Miner”’, pp.299-312.

¹⁸ T. Marchant Williams, *The Welsh Members of Parliament 1894* (Cardiff: Daniel Owen & Co., 1894).

¹⁹ Lewis Lloyd, *Australians from Wales*, pp.241-2.

it became obvious that he and Hall were kindred souls. They were a well-matched partnership, both having a newspaper background and both being effective and crowd-pleasing orators. They were both always characterised as entertaining company, both short in stature, energetic and rapid in their movements. Even where they were different, they complemented each other, with Pritchard Morgan's business skills and financial contacts balancing well with Hall's geological expertise. Both were also described as being fervently 'Celtic' (though both Hall's and Morgan's sense of a specific Welsh identity was fluid, to say the least). In the March 1898 Hotel Cécil banquet, Hall was feted as being a 'Celt', proud of his ancestry. As previously said, he refers in a 'Rambler' column to his having been a Sunday school teacher in both Welsh and English and that he had attended Welsh chapels.²⁰ Pritchard Morgan, though always wearing his nationality on his sleeve, did not speak Welsh. Indeed in the *Western Mail* he stated that 'Welsh is not needed in the House of Commons' and a *Tarian y Gweithiwr* letter asserts '*Y mae ... R. Ffoulkes Griffiths yn Gymro a ddeall Cymraeg a Pritchard Morgan yn un na fedr dim*' [R. Ffoulkes Griffiths is a Welshman who understands Welsh and Pritchard Morgan is one who has no capability in the language].²¹ Hall's fluency may also have been relative, as he of course came originally from Herefordshire, though having a grandfather who was probably of Welsh stock, and possibly Welsh-speaking, and was later brought up in largely Welsh-speaking Aberdare. However, he was often described as a fluent speaker and he clearly understood and spoke the language well enough to use it effectively, since he reported sermons in Swansea and the words of Welsh speakers at many of Pritchard Morgan's election meetings.

Both men were extremely sociable and enjoyed a drink. Pritchard Morgan was censured by his opponents during the 1888 by-election as being one of '*dynion y dafarn*' [the public house men].²² The *Southern Times* in Australia later characterized the difference between Hall and Herbert Hoover, later manager at the Sons of Gwalia mine, as being that Hall revelled in 'eat, drink and be merry' and in 'booming' his mine, while Hoover was sober and taciturn.²³ Both Hall and Morgan delighted in

²⁰ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 31 July 1884.

²¹ *Western Mail* (Cardiff), 1 October 1888; *Tarian y Gweithiwr*, letter, 25 October 1888.

²² *Tarian y Gweithiwr*, 11 October 1888.

²³ *Southern Times*, 27 October 1923. 'Eat drink and be merry was Hall's motto; Hoover ate and drank sparingly and was not given to jollity. Hall liked to boom, or, as he put it "blow about" the

music—the *Malcolm Chronicle* regularly recounted approvingly that duets between Hall and his North Star mine manager, John Jones, were the highlights of the concerts in Leonora and Malcolm in the 1896-1900 period, while a Morgan supporter at the 1888 by-election even gave his singing ability as a reason for voting for him.²⁴ Both also positioned themselves on the working-man's side of the Liberal and Radical political spectrum, supporting rights of workers and extension of the franchise. How far this tallied with Morgan's actual position is more doubtful, as in parliament he was regarded as a maverick whose views were more Tory than Liberal, and who often used the parliamentary chamber as a platform to promote his own capitalist and Colonies interests—Crown royalties, free trade and assistance for emigrants, for instance.

At the time of the Merthyr by-election, however, Pritchard Morgan echoed the Radical tone of George Hall's 'Rambler' column in the *Cambria Daily Leader*, and several of his supporters' newspaper letters leading up to the by-election sound suspiciously like Hall's turn of phrase also, though lurking under a pseudonym.²⁵ Morgan, was himself already well enough experienced in manipulating the media; bearing in mind his talent for self-publicity and previous newspaper activities in Queensland, it must be that he and Hall learnt well from each other. As will be seen in chapter 6, it is clear by the time Hall entered the political arena in Australia, he had also grasped Pritchard Morgan's lesson that factual accuracy was less important than the impression created.

Morgan's 1888 election address in Merthyr advocated payment for MPs, (a Labour priority), free education in Wales and provision of intermediate education, and nationalization of the railways.²⁶ Both he and Hall were ardent supporters of Home Rule, not only in Ireland but also in Wales. Both also were strongly in favour of disestablishment and the disendowment of the Church of England. Both also came out

mine and enjoyed the company of pressmen. Hoover said very little, and less when newspaper representatives were present'.

²⁴ William Watson Price, *Biographical Archive*, chronicles Morgan's singing *penillion* as 'having brought tears to the eyes of Australian miners'.

²⁵ *Tarian y Gweithiwr*, between 4 October-1 November 1888; *Western Mail* for the same period.

²⁶ *Tarian y Gweithiwr*, 4 October 1888.

in support of women's rights, Hall, as has been stated earlier, through his newspaper columns, and Morgan active in parliament on the matter.²⁷

Even so, Morgan was never trusted as being a true voice of the Radical movement, disliked by the chapel-going Liberal caucus of Merthyr and loathed by his fellow Merthyr MP, D.A. Thomas. Both he and Hall were hampered by the public perception of their voicing populist radical views and espousing workers' causes, whilst at the same time being manifest representatives of capital and employers; D.A. Thomas also suffered the same problem. Pritchard Morgan had been bitterly attacked during the Merthyr by-election and subsequently as a capitalist and crypto-Tory. Hall was similarly to suffer in the 1901 Mount Margaret election to the Western Australian State Legislature from his paradoxical role as a rich capitalist director of a mining company, yet still propounding socialist views on workers' rights. This was certainly a contributory cause to his narrow loss in the election, where he had appeared a clear favourite.²⁸ Yet, as we shall see, Hall, throughout his time in Australia, seems to have acted in a manner consistent with his proclaimed beliefs, both social and political. Consensus and common interest between worker and management was his constant theme.

Despite their similarities, Hall and Morgan were very different in two major ways. The first was in their relative wealth and connections. Morgan, the older by eleven years, had behind him a not inconsiderable, though precarious and largely paper-based, fortune, assembled initially by his legal activities, daring but lucky speculations in Queensland gold mines, Australian newspaper ownership and most notably, his rich and opportune strike in Gwynfynydd in 1887.²⁹ As early as 1883, he had a dubious reputation in London for the rapidity in which he established, and wound up, a series of companies. It was one of his companies, the International Exhibition of Mining and Metallurgy Association that organized the International Mining Exhibition at Crystal Palace in August 1890, an Australian-dominated event,

²⁷ *The Englishwoman's Review*, 15 April 1892, regarding employment of women at the pit brow, for instance.

²⁸ This election is dealt with more fully in chap. 6.

²⁹ *Ashburton Guardian*, 31 December 1887; *Western Mail* (Cardiff), 22 April, 1887, which also referred to Pritchard Morgan attending a banquet in Cardiff in honour of his old legal adversary and fellow Welshman, Sir Samuel Griffith, later Premier of Queensland.

which depended heavily on products from New South Wales. Indeed, Pritchard Morgan as chairman gained much publicity from an event that, despite its eventual success, had appeared for many months to be heading for disaster. In Ireland he was described as ‘Mr Pritchard Morgan (of Welsh gold mining notoriety)’, because of his habit of ‘shepherding’ leases in Wicklow—buying up prospecting licences and then doing nothing with them, to prevent others developing them.³⁰ His core company at 1 Victoria Street, Morgan, Pritchard and Company, was well known in the financial and mining markets of London, and his web of establishment contacts was well-developed through Parliament and through Freemasonry. He had on hand a significant number of Liberal MPs as ‘guinea-pigs’—the term used for those public figures well known to the press who were co-opted as directors to front speculative mining companies.

Hall in contrast, though well respected as a newspaper editor and geologist in Swansea, had no funds or companies behind him. His father and grandfather, a tailor and a watchmaker respectively, though craftsmen, would have had neither the status nor the means to back Hall financially. Though he had received some schooling, the employment where he had started before contributing columns to the *Swansea Journal* was, as has been stated previously, as a Chandler’s clerk. As an editor in Swansea, though mixing with many wealthy people, he would not have been particularly well-paid, and his vain and spendthrift wife Martha Mary would have been expensive to support. This, as was suggested earlier, may well have been part of the motivation that brought him to London and employment with Morgan in 1890.

The second major difference was in their perceived reliability and dependability. Though Pritchard Morgan was a well-known and sociable public figure, few people trusted him. Newspapers often referred to him as ‘The Welsh Gold King’ or disparagingly as ‘*Y Llo Aur*’ (the Golden Calf), and there are frequent references also to his boastfulness, and unpopularity, in particular in Meirionnydd.³¹ He was frequently engaged in court actions, for libel or for doubtful financial

³⁰ *The Queenslander*, 16 September, 1888; Hanbury C. Geoghegan, ‘A plea for Irish mines and minerals, under an Irish board, and for preparation of a mining survey,’ *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, Dublin, 1907-08.

³¹ *Timaru Herald* (New Zealand), 8 March 1888.

dealings, including the Crown prosecution on disputed royalties at Gwynfynydd.³² D.A. Thomas detested him, and backed Keir Hardie in the 1900 election because of Morgan's broken promises to the electorate and frequent absences abroad. (Whereas Henry Richard his revered predecessor as MP, was often known as 'the Member for Wales', Pritchard Morgan because of his absences abroad was nicknamed 'The Member for China').³³ Kenneth O. Morgan described him during the 1900 election as 'a militant imperialist' for his fervid support of the South African War; this was what led to the final schism with the anti-war D.A. Thomas, and contributed substantially to his defeat by Keir Hardie.³⁴

Morgan's reputation highlights in contrast a key characteristic of Hall, who was always regarded as trustworthy, yet was a man who spoke his mind. He was universally liked, popular and generous to a fault, and was highly regarded and authoritatively quoted by mining journalists and newspapers in Britain and abroad, certainly until the post-1902 period, when his credibility as a mining pundit waned. Thus, the two men were linked by both their similarities and the complementarity of their differences.

Straight after the election, Hall in his 'Rambler' column had commented authoritatively on the fanciful stories being circulated on the likely yield of Morgan's Gwynfynydd mine.³⁵ Even before he was working for Morgan, he had already started investing in his new future. By October 1889 he and his wife held 95 Gwynfynydd shares in the Morgan Gold Mining Company; he had obviously been impressed on his visit to the mine, chronicled in the previous February's *Cambria Daily Leader*.³⁶

³² *The Times*, 1 April 1889; *The Star* (Christchurch, New Zealand), 8 June 1889. Morgan had misquoted a mining report on his mine, and when corrected in the press by the son of the writer, sued for libel, and in turn libeled the son. Cross-actions resulted, with a conclusion satisfactory to neither. See footnote 14 earlier in this chapter for the Crown royalties dispute.

³³ Russell Deacon, 'The Liberals' Golden Year, or the end of an era?', *Western Mail* (Cardiff), 7 October 2010.

³⁴ Kenneth O. Morgan, *Wales in British Politics 1868-1922*, p.206; William Stewart, *J. Keir Hardie, a Biography* (Cassell & Company, London & New York, 1921), pp.162-169; *The Miner, An Advanced Political Journal*, November 1888, p.121, where Keir Hardie had been one of the first to congratulate Morgan, whom he described as 'champion of the working man', on his 1888 victory.

³⁵ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 6 November 1888.

³⁶ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 16 February 1889. Also National Archive record, BT31/4140/26701, Morgan Gold Mining Company.

The Swansea send-off by the *Cambria Daily Leader* in April 1890 saw him move to a prosperous address in London. Nevertheless, as has been indicated earlier, there is less direct evidence of this subsequent period in Hall's life. It is only through Morgan's very public activities in mining, and our knowledge that Hall was involved in them, that we can obtain any picture of his role in Welsh gold-mining and the London investment market. Little documentary evidence attributable to him survives, with the exception of brief statements in records of annual company meetings, and his signature on successive Morgan companies as Company Secretary, and latterly, as a director. We certainly know where he lived; in 1891 the family resided at number 22 Kestrel Avenue, Lambeth.³⁷ In that census Hall was described as a 'city manager', and in addition to his wife Mary Martha, five children were living with them, and two female servants, both from Wales; four other young children, including twins, had died between 1881 and 1889. By 1894 the family had moved to another address just across the road, at number 11 Kestrel Avenue. His regard for Pritchard Morgan is also shown by his naming his youngest son Pritchard Morgan Hall. The eldest son, George William James Hall, died at the age of 13 of a chill, after skating in Norwood Park in 1894.³⁸ It is conceivable that this tragedy could have provided another motivation the following year for his father to once more change spheres, and to venture with Pritchard Morgan to Australia

The same Australian newspaper source which provided his 1901 election campaign biography suggested that while living in London, he had been a member of the Liberals' Radical 500. It stated that he, with Social Democrat and Union activists Tom Mann and George Nicholl Barnes, produced the Radical Manifesto of 1893, and that his platform work brought success in the election of that year.³⁹ This seems highly unlikely, however; the election was in 1892, and Liberals did not do

³⁷ Census return 1891, Lambeth, London, Public Record Office, RG12/415.

³⁸ Family tree in the personal papers of Irma F. Wigley, grand-daughter of George W. Hall, author's private collection, obtained 2010 from G.W. Hall, Ludlow, late President of the Welsh Mining History Society.

³⁹ Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797/6, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988; Irma F. Wigley deposit, Ms Hall, G.W., RGSSA. The cutting from an unidentified newspaper, giving Hall's biography at the time of the Mount Margaret State Legislature election, was collected by Frank Hall, G.W. Hall's son, *circa* 1901. This also states that Hall's family on his mother's side was Welsh from Herefordshire, his father from Aberdeen and his antecedents included Irish, Norman and Saxon stock. (He clearly wanted to make sure he appealed to as many of the electorate as possible). The same information was also used in Hall's obituary in the *Adelaide Advertiser*, 18 January 1915.

particularly well, though it is true that the strength of the radical arm was significantly improved in the London area. Thus, though this tale may have a basis of fact, the detail has certainly become distorted in its telling. Though the likelihood that Hall would have associated in London with Mann and Barnes, whose Socialist Democratic politics were far more radical than his own, may appear far-fetched, there is no doubt that at this time Mann was courted by the Liberals.⁴⁰ We also know that during Tom Mann's period in Australia, a public speaking tour to the Kalgoorlie Goldfields included a detour north to Malcolm and Leonora, and it is feasible to argue that that it would have been Hall who had invited him there; otherwise it is unlikely he would have travelled so far north from Kalgoorlie.⁴¹ Therefore, it is conceivable that their acquaintance went back to London days.

Morgan's companies provided Hall with a good income and opportunities to rise in the world. He would have mixed with the influential network with whom Morgan associated through his parliamentary contacts, with the Liberal hierarchy, and through the location of his company at the heart of the City's finance district. As part of his duties in relation to the mine, Hall must have moved back and fore between London and Meirionnydd, since there is a photograph of the four surviving children at Aber Eden, Morgan's Ganllwyd home in 1895.⁴²

The Morgan Mining Company had been wound up in 1890.⁴³ This was a favourite ploy of Pritchard Morgan to reconstruct the company and reduce debt, and probably to take a profit himself. For the successor New Morgan Mining Company, Pritchard Morgan's 'booming' of the mine succeeded in attracting large numbers of small investors, many of them from Wales, to take up the 160,000 shares. Morgan used a web of nominees, including his wife, sister and daughters, and even Jane Attwood, a servant at his home in Aber Eden, to increase his own holdings, adding over 10,000 shares to those safeguarded from the old company. Hall, now company

⁴⁰ 'Tom Mann and his times (1890-92)', *Our History* (n.p.p., History Group of the Communist Party, double pamphlet nos. 26 and 27, n.d.), editorial note, p.20. 'But he [Mann] is also courted by the middle-class and, before the elections of 1892, which for the last time returned Gladstone to power, is invited by the Liberals to take an official post in the state'.

⁴¹ *West Australian*, 9 August 1904. Tom Mann had returned from his lecturing tour of the Eastern Goldfields the previous day, and while at Malcolm, Gwalia and Leonora had stayed in the State Hotel, Gwalia.

⁴² Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797/7, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988.

⁴³ *Wrexham Advertiser*, 31 May 1890.

secretary of the New Morgan Mining Company held only 65 shares but, following Morgan's example, controlled a further 808 shares between his wife, Martha Mary and his sister-in-law Lucy.⁴⁴

Yet another liquidation of this company in March 1894 emphasised that after the great gold strike of 1888 the Gwynfynydd gold had become elusive, and capital was running short.⁴⁵ Only £1000 remained in the company account at liquidation, and the purchase price for transfer to the new company, British Gold Fields, was less than £2000.⁴⁶ This time the seven founder shares were augmented by only 100 further shares but there were significant debentures to raise capital, the bulk of which were owed to two Radical Liberals, Sir Halley Stewart MP, preacher and newspaper editor, and Thomas Bagley MP, and also to Edwin H. Dunning, described as a gentleman, of East Grinstead; these three held the majority of shares between them. In addition, Morgan had brought in another Liberal MP, Sir William Ingram, director of the *Illustrated London News*, who was later to become chair of the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency. This shows that the newspaper connection was still important to the two Welsh partners. Of the 107 shares, Pritchard Morgan and his associates held one third. Morgan and his wife Harriet held 29 between them, and his sister Augusta, daughter Sarah, his mother and Jane Attwood held one each. Hall and his wife Martha also held one each, and Hall now featured for the first time as a director of the company, as well as Company Secretary. This company though hitting good ore in the New Adit in 1894-5 was also short-lived, going into liquidation with an overdraft of £1940 by 1896, and then restructuring with a £15,000 mortgage share issue under the same name. By that date, Morgan had been effectively stripped of power in the British Gold Fields Company, and held only 750 of the newly issued shares through his Mines Royal Company; Hall, Ingram and Pritchard Morgan and their nominees no longer held any direct interest in British Gold Fields. Hall was recorded at first as Company Secretary of the Mines Royal, set up by Pritchard Morgan in 1895 to take over the Gwynfynydd lease, which had initially received objections to its name from the Board of Trade.⁴⁷ This company seems to have been largely moribund, and by August 1895, Pritchard Morgan was reduced to one share in

⁴⁴ National Archive record, BT31/4777/31609, New Morgan Mine Company.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, BT34/697/31609, New Morgan Mine Company.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, BT31/5810/40769, British Gold Fields.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, BT31/6183/43801, Mines Royal Company.

it of a total of 5009, with the bulk held by Robert William Hudson, heir to a Victorian soap entrepreneur and John Henry Angus, a Liverpool leather dealer. Hall had also had been squeezed out from the post of company secretary.

It is highly likely, therefore, that Morgan had finally paid the price for the inconsistent, but overall declining success of the Gwynfynydd mine. Since 1887, this mine had made him over £90,000 from early rich strikes and its sale to the Morgan Mining Company. Profits from the halcyon period of 1887-8 (and help of a further mortgage, from his own wife Harriet), also enabled him to purchase the freehold of the Tyddyn Gwladys mine from the landowner, John Chidlaw Roberts together with the leasehold of the whole of the Gwynfynydd and Cwm Hessian mining areas, an area amounting to over 900 acres. Since that first rich strike, however, the Gwynfynydd mine had reduced significantly in production, with the gold being found in 'bunches' rather than following a line of lode. Indeed, it was to produce little profit for the Morgan Mining Company and its successors after 1890. This ended probably the most notable period in Welsh gold-mining history, a chapter of considerable public awareness of the mine, generated by one big gold strike, and a great deal of newspaper publicity, but one where the company promoters rather than investors were the beneficiaries.⁴⁸ Declining fortunes at Gwynfynydd hailed a crucial change in Hall's career. In 1895, Morgan and Hall set off, with a party of supporting mining workers, for Australia.⁴⁹ Later, at the 1898 Sons of Gwalia launch Hall described this as an impulse decision by Morgan, which the London and Westralian company secretary, Paddon, had immediately backed. The reality was probably somewhat different; being squeezed out of Gwynfynydd probably meant that there were few other options available to Morgan.

Nevertheless, moving to Australia did not mean a break with contact networks in London, although these still depended on Morgan. When they both returned to England for the Sons of Gwalia mine launch in March 1898, Morgan was to propose

⁴⁸ G.W. Hall, *The Gold Mines of Merioneth* pp.92-96; G.W. Hall's article, 'Gwynfynydd Mine - a Recap', *Below!: Journal of the Shropshire Caving and Mining Club*, Spring 2003.1, reprises 'The Gold Mines of Merioneth'; T.A. Morrison, 'Gold Mining in Western Merioneth', *Journal of the Merioneth Historical and Record Society*, vol. VII, 1973-76, pp.28-71 and pp.140-187 provides additional detail.

⁴⁹ *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 October, 1895.

him for the Grand Master's Lodge, No 1, London, as a Master Mason. The networking value to both Hall and Morgan of membership of such a high status Lodge would have been significant in their efforts to attract mining capital to the various Gwalia leases in Western Australia. This lodge, one of the most prestigious in Britain, had as Grand Master the Prince of Wales, until his accession to the throne as Edward VII; his successor was the Duke of Connaught. At the time of Hall's 'raising', he gave as his home address Morgan's company offices at 1 Victoria Street London, since by then his family had moved to Adelaide and he himself was in residence at the Hotel Cécil in central London. Indeed, Hall was further 'exalted' to the Grand Master's Chapter, No.1 in January 1903, during his long sojourn in London at that period.⁵⁰ He was also an Australian lodge member in Malcolm from 1900 to 1905, during his period at the North Star and the Sons of Gwalia.⁵¹ However, it is unlikely that he was a prominent London masonic figure as there is no mention of him in the minutes of lodge meetings, and he ceased membership in London in December 1907, when his financial affairs were at a very low ebb, probably because he had not paid his fees.

Throughout their 27-year relationship Hall was very much the junior partner to Morgan, though in Australian newspapers he was often identified as the public face of the partnership, particularly in relation to the Sons of Gwalia and all subsequent London and Westralian mines. Also, though appearing extremely wealthy by Australian standards, Hall's supporting funding was always precarious, and the need to shore up the mining ventures' investment necessitated his extended stays in London. These visits were themselves, as will be seen, an extravagant drain on Hall's personal resources, staying as he always did at the Hotel Cécil, which at that time was the most prestigious, and the most expensive, new hotel in London.⁵²

⁵⁰ Charles Belton, *United Grand Lodge of England, Record of Members* (Library and Museum of the Freemasonry, London, 1904) and other e-mailed information from Peter Aitkenhead, assistant librarian of the Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London.

⁵¹ Archives committee, Western Australian Freemasons, WAC inquiry 027dbk., George W. Hall, mine attorney in Lodge 34, Malcolm.

⁵² Arthur H. Beavan, *Imperial London* (London: J.M. Dent & Co.1901) cited in <http://www.imperial-london.me.uk/cecil-hotel.php>, accessed 25 July 2011. The hotel was claimed to be the largest in the world at that time.

To conclude, by the time he went to Australia, Hall had established himself as a prominent person in mining circles, and had a well-defined place in London society. Both of these developments had depended very largely on the patronage of Pritchard Morgan. This chapter has also demonstrated the inextricably linked nature of their working and personal relationship. It shows that the reasons for their closeness and mutuality were their social similarities, and the complementarity of their characters and capabilities.

What Hall had also acquired through his familiarity with the Gwynfynydd mine was his appreciation of the qualities of two individuals who would play significant parts in his ventures over the coming years. The first was Alexander Wilson Castle, a Fraser and Chalmers erection engineer, who had initially undertaken erection work in Gwynfynydd, and who, when Hall was company secretary of the British Gold Fields Company, he had entrusted with the post of mine agent there.⁵³ He had also worked with John Jones on the Gwynfynydd staff, who was to become first the underground manager, and then manager, of the North Star mine, Malcolm, which will feature prominently in the next chapter. Jones was also Hall's popular duet partner and instigator of the glee club in Leonora and Malcolm musical evenings, a significant factor in Hall's subsequent social popularity. They were both to prove vital allies in his Australian ventures, and it is to developments on that continent that this thesis now turns.

⁵³ Home Office list of mines, 1894-1895, British Gold Fields; Deborah Watkins, family history monograph.

Chapter 4

The Rising Star - Hall, Mining and the Press in Australia and London 1895-1900

This chapter focuses on Hall's life and career in Australia following his arrival in Albany as a member of Pritchard Morgan's party in November 1895. Continuing the journalism theme explored in chapter 2, it shows how Hall used his experience in the newspaper world of Wales to influence and indeed shape his life and activities in Australia, and to present his public persona there and in London as a mining expert. It is argued that he harnessed his press experience to 'boom' and 'puff' the prospects of his mining developments as well as to support his political ambition. Finally, almost paradoxically the chapter illustrates how Hall used the press to present himself, a capitalist representative of the mine-owners, as a community leader on workers' issues and social matters.

His activities are of interest not only from the biographical standpoint. A study of his Australian exploits contributes to the history of the Welsh in Western Australia, a facet of Australian Welsh history that is largely unchronicled. Indeed, few studies in Australian history so far have concentrated upon individuals, rather than communities, of Welsh origin, particularly those who were of significant influence. The most extensive of such studies have naturally focussed on Australian premier William Morris 'Billy' Hughes, Welsh-speaking and of Welsh parents, though born in London.¹ However, even such a notable Western Australian figure as Welsh-born mine owner, labour leader and politician Alfred Morgans, who for a short period was premier of Western Australia, appears to have been virtually neglected.² The most comprehensive examination of Welsh individuals in Australia is undoubtedly Lewis Lloyd's *Australians from Wales*, which, does include a case study of Pritchard

¹ Carl Bridge, *William Hughes, Australia: The peace conferences of 1919-23 and their aftermath* (London: Haus Publishing, 2011); Aneurin Hughes, *Billy Hughes: Prime Minister and Controversial Founding Father of the Australian Labor Party* (Brisbane: John Wiley and Sons, Australia, 2005); L.F. Fitzhardinge, *William Morris Hughes: A political biography, 1862-1914*, vol.1, *That Fiery Particle* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1964); L.F. Fitzhardinge, *William Morris Hughes: A political biography, 1914-1952*, vol.2, *The Little Digger* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1964-1979) among others.

² G.S. Reid, & M.R. Oliver, 'Mr Alfred Edward Morgans' in *The Premiers of Western Australia; 1890-1982*. (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 1982).

Morgan and his earlier activities in Queensland, but makes no mention of his later role in George Hall's work in Western Australia, and gives two lines to Alfred Morgans.³ A short Australian chapter in R. Brinley Jones' *World Wide Wales* is, of necessity, rather superficial.⁴ Another notable Welsh contemporary entrepreneur, Llewellyn Williams, well known at the time as owner of the Cardiff Castle gold mine at Widgiemooltha, is ignored totally by historians.⁵ A recent publication, Susan Hart's *Hiraeth, a History of the Welsh and the Welsh Free Church in Western Australia*, does give a picture of those of Welsh origin who were connected with the Welsh Church in the Perth and Fremantle areas, though there is nothing on the gold fields in this volume.⁶

It is also surprising that nothing appears to have been written about the significant pioneering Welsh presence among the management and ownership of coal mines in Colliefields, Western Australia, where two of the major mines, the Proprietary and the Cardiff were Welsh-owned, and managed by successive Welsh managers over the 1900-1910 period. A Welsh Anglican clergyman, Jonathan Ceredig Davies, the minister responsible for erecting the first church in Colliefields, produced a somewhat idiosyncratic history of Western Australia, and an augmented Welsh version, which identified Alfred Morgans and George Hall as the two Welshmen who had been benefactors to him in Western Australia. He referred to Hall as being 'despite the English name ... a Welshman who speaks Welsh fluently' in his later *Life, Travel and Reminiscences*.⁷

It should be noted that it is often difficult in the context of Australian history to establish precisely the nationality of immigrants. In *Australians from Wales*, Lewis

³ Lewis Lloyd, *Australians from Wales*, p.9. He points out that 'the Welsh as immigrants... have been generally ignored by most Australian historians', and that censuses subsumed Welsh under an English, or England and Wales, category.

⁴ R. Brinley Jones, *World Wide Wales* (Porthyrhyd, Drovers' Press, 2005), p.50-57

⁵ *West Australian* (Perth), 21 June 1895; <http://www.mindat.org/loc-203748.html>, Cardiff Castle Mine, accessed 1 December, 2013.

⁶ Susan Hart, *Hiraeth: a History of the Welsh and the Welsh Free Church in Western Australia* (Perth: University of Western Australia 2010).

⁷ Jonathan Ceredig Davies, *Western Australia: Its History and Progress, The Native Blacks, Towns, Country Districts and The Goldfields* (Nantymoel: T Evans, printers, 1902), p.114; the Welsh version, *Awstralia Orllewinol: Hanes a Chynydd y Wlad a'i Thrigolion, Amaethyddiaeth, a Chloddfeydd Aur, a'r Brodorion Duon a'u Harferion* (Treorchy: Tom J. Davies, 1903), p.94; *Life, Travel and Reminiscences of Jonathan Ceredig Davies* (Llanddewi-Brefi: self-published, 1927), p.141-2.

Lloyd berates the misuse of the term ‘Anglo-Saxon’ rather than the more accurate ‘Anglo-Celtic’. He also points out ‘the term Australians from Wales can be considered fairly elastic’ as statistics are unreliable, and many stayed only briefly. Certainly George W. Hall, could be considered to fall into this category. David Lucas gives examples of people who have lived in more than one country of the British Isles or who were born—like Lloyd George or Australian premier Billy Hughes—in England.⁸ He examines in some detail the difficulties of identification of the Anglo-Celts, and while suggesting that Welsh-born constituted by far the smallest number, also suggests that numbers are obscured because of lack of differentiation between English and Welsh nationalities in most methods of computation.⁹ Numbers of Welsh people in Western Australia at this time were certainly low, and Susan Hart suggests there were only 909 Welsh-born individuals on the 1901 census, the majority being in the gold fields and Colliefields.¹⁰

Hall would already have known a good deal about the current Western Australian mining boom when he arrived there. Pritchard Morgan would have kept up-to-date with such matters following his experiences in Queensland, and under Hall’s editorship in Swansea, the *Cambria Daily Leader* had regularly drawn on such papers as the *British Australasian* for news from Australian sources. Conversely, some of the most frequent stories for the Western Australian press were the doings of the London money markets and their mining shares. As we shall see, both while Hall was in Australia, and on the occasions when he returned to London, he would often be quoted in the *British Australasian* and in the British press generally as an authority on Western Australian mining.

However, Hall’s relationship with newspapers in Australia was now very different from his period as a columnist and editor in Swansea. Previously he had written the news; now he needed to make the news. He had to depend on his ability to ‘plant’ stories in newspapers in London and Australia to promote his mining ventures. He would also need Australian newspaper backing for the numerous social

⁸ David Lucas, *The Welsh, Irish, Scots and English in Australia* (Canberra: Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, 1987), p.6.

⁹ David Lucas, *The Welsh, Irish, Scots and English in Australia*, p.20. ‘...in 1891, there were roughly one Welsh born person for every 7 Scots, 14 Irish or 27 English born’.

¹⁰ Susan Hart, *Hiraeth: a History of the Welsh and the Welsh Free Church*, p.44.

and community campaigns that he was to undertake on behalf of the north-eastern goldfields area, and to boost his public and political profile. His public image while in Australia would still echo that of the traditional Welsh Lib-Lab politician, such as miner's agent and MP William Abraham (Mabon), who like Hall was a moderate voice believing that disputes should be solved through dialogue.¹¹ Similarly, back in Wales, D.A. Thomas, though wealthy, still retained his social awareness and responsibility and was concerned about the common interests of the capitalist and the working man. Hall's grand-daughter, Irma Wigley in her collection of his papers and newspaper cuttings on Hall's doings, many of which were passed to her by her father, Frank, recorded:

He used to say to his sons, 'We must see that the living as well as the production of gold are improved simultaneously. It is a harsh area climactically and if we can make for happier workers, in the long run more efficient production will result'.¹²

Hall's association with religion and social justice would also remain constant from Swansea to Western Australia. During his time in Malcolm he was a reader in church, as well as being a JP in both Malcolm and Adelaide, and eventually Wiluna. Both he and Alfred Morgans were credited with having contributed £10 each to the efforts of their compatriot, Jonathan Ceredig Davies, to build the first church in Colliefields in 1897.¹³

However, there is no doubt that the most important reason for which Hall needed publicity in both newspapers and journals was to 'sell' his mines. Successful flotation for mines developed by the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency on the London money market depended absolutely on positive Australian press stories and press reports of its company meetings about Hall's success in acquiring rich leases. He utilised the same journalistic techniques in manipulation of

¹¹ For discussion of Mabon, see E.W. Evans, *Mabon (William Abraham) 1842-1922* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1959); Chris Williams, *Democratic Rhondda: Politics and Society 1885-1951* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press 1996); Andy Croll, ' "Mabon's Day": the rise and fall of a Lib-Lab holiday in the South Wales coalfield, 1888-1898', *Labour History Review*, vol.72, no. 1 (April 2007), pp.49-68.

¹² Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/1, papers of G. W. Hall, 1895-1988.

¹³ Susan Hart, *Hiraeth: a History of the Welsh and the Welsh Free Church* p.29; Jonathan Ceredig Davies, *Awstralia Orllewinol, Hanes a Chynnydd y Wlad a'i thrigolion*, p.92; Jonathan Ceredig Davies *Life Travels and Reminiscences*, p.141-2; Jonathan Ceredig Davies, letter to Lady Hills-Johnes, L6095, Dolacothi Papers, National Library of Wales, p.8.

the media in Australia and in London—interviews showing his direct and often conversational style, his grasp of sentence construction and pithy utterances, his witty comparisons—that he had so effectively used in his columns in Swansea. Now, however, he used them not so much to convince and persuade his readers politically and socially, but to boost his own image, to sell his mines, and establish himself as an important ‘expert’ in mining matters. From his first arrival in Australia he was always available to journalists for extensive interview and a memorable quotation. However, as he was to find during his sensational divorce case in 1902, the press could be a two-edged weapon.

In using the press in this way, Hall showed again the influence of his mentor. A central theme of this thesis, that Hall’s activities were indivisible from those of Pritchard Morgan, is also illustrated by developments in Australia. Morgan was himself well accustomed to using the press for personal advantage and publicity in Gwynfynydd, as he had in Queensland days.¹⁴ This increased after his Merthyr election; his parliamentary speeches widely reported in London newspapers, had been most frequently about payment of royalties. He frequently quoted Australian and Canadian practice and contrasted it with the lack of opportunity that the British royalties system provided, and the consequent damage to employment and exploitation of minerals.¹⁵ As a result he was lauded by journalists as being an MP who, they said, was speaking with practical experience of mining matters, unlike so many other MPs. His frequent letters to *The Times* were extensive and closely argued as he fought to get the Crown to bring to court the long-delayed action against him on Gwynfynydd mineral rights.

As was seen in the previous chapter, Morgan and Hall’s decision to go to Australia had probably been as the result of a coup by Pritchard Morgan’s fellow directors in the British Gold Fields Company, who had evicted him from the board; as a result, George Hall was also out of a job as company secretary. It was natural therefore for Morgan to return to the colonies, where he claimed he had made a

¹⁴ *Otago Daily Times*, 28 July 1888. The journalist suggests that Morgan’s newspaper claims on production at his Welsh mine were much exaggerated; ‘What a splendid newspaper editor the man would make!’ he commented.

¹⁵ *Hansard*, 5 May 1892, vol. 4, cc.168-72, *Hansard*, 30 May 1895, vol. 34, cc. 653-5 *Hansard*, 20 June, 1889, vol. 337, cc.316-7, exemplify questions raised; see also footnote 14, Chap.3.

previous fortune in Queensland through newspaper and mining speculation, and also for Hall to accompany him. However, since Morgan was last in Australia, the gold-mining focus had moved to the newly developing fields in Western Australia, and thus it was there that Morgan went in 1895. His stay there was to be short, since he moved rapidly on to South Australia and thence to China.

Public interest in gold mines in the 1890s in Britain had long been fuelled by reports of Australian gold discoveries. Though gold had been discovered earlier in Western Australia, the first major discoveries in that colony were at Coolgardie in 1892 and Kalgoorlie in 1893. It was often small-scale syndicates who provided the financial backing for many of the prospectors, setting out into the unfavourable and often dangerous conditions of the interior. These generally wanted a quick return on their investment, selling out to larger companies, the majority British-backed. Western Australian investment fever was high among the British public in the early 1890s, particularly among business and commercial classes, who, as a result of late Victorian prosperity in Britain, had unprecedented personal finance to invest. Speculators and mine promoters, whose stories of massive dividends were generally much overstated, further inflated this interest. The world of gold-mining and gold-mine investment into which Hall ventured in 1895 was a complex one. This period of Western Australian gold fields development is well covered in Appleyard and Mel Davies' 1988 essay, 'Financiers of Western Australia's Goldfields' from which we can see how the activities of Pritchard Morgan's London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency echoed on a smaller scale the way in which companies of speculators, including those of the fraudulent Horatio Bottomley and Whitaker Wright, operated.¹⁶ It was a period when, as Appleyard and Davies put it, 'This situation provided ready opportunities for less than honest men on the goldfields and in London to make a lot of money'.¹⁷ Their essay outlines the steps that the speculator would take, from initially commissioning the easily obtained 'expert reports' on the mine, which would then be either floated directly or through sale to another company, which in turn would use any method it could to manipulate the market and boost its shares. With so much distance between Australia and London, it was easy for the

¹⁶ R.T Appleyard and Melville Davies, 'Financiers of Western Australia's Goldfields' in R.T. Appleyard, and C. B Schedvin (eds.), *Australian Financiers: Biographical Essays* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1988).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.162-164.

report of the mine manager—the ‘man on the spot’—to be inflated, and for insider dealing by directors in the company, and often by the managers themselves, to cream off profits at the expense of ordinary shareholders.¹⁸

By the time of Hall and Morgan’s arrival, such speculative investment in Western Australian gold-mining was receiving a bad press. Influential Dutch financier and journalist, S.F. Van Oss had caused a storm of controversy when he commented adversely on the situation, suggesting that of the £75 million of nominal capital in Western Australian mining shares, no less than £60 million had ended in the pockets of promoters, whom he described as ‘voracious vultures’.¹⁹ Capital development of mines, in the meantime, was significantly underfunded, with less than a quarter of the nominal capital of companies actually used as working capital. Thus many of the flotations had little connection with the value of the mines they purported to represent. The *Auckland Star* described Vann Oss’s article as a ‘startling and unsparing exposure of a colossal system of wildcat speculation’.²⁰ Nevertheless, as had happened with speculative investment in London in the 1880s mining boom, where other parts of Australia had featured so strongly, there was still much public interest in the newly developing Western Australian ventures.

Hall had landed in Albany in November 1895 with Morgan, Morgan’s daughter Katherine, and a team of Welsh gold-mining men with whom he had worked at Gwynfynydd, on behalf of the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency.²¹ Pritchard Morgan had set up this company with three other directors in September 1895, intending to using Hall’s mining and geology experience as their

¹⁸ Jean Greenwood, *The Gold Discoveries of Western Australia: Their Effect on the Social, Political and Life of the State*, Honours dissertation thesis, University of Western Australia 1934, pp.192-218 outlines effectively the effects on Western Australian investment during the boom year of 1895 and the end of the boom in 1896.

¹⁹ S.F. Van Oss, ‘The Westralian Mining Boom’, pp.711. ‘Between the first day of March 1894 and the last day of September 1896 not less than 731 Western Australian gold-mining companies, with an aggregate nominal capital of £75,871,372l, have offered their shares for subscription to British investors. The greater part of these companies—to be exact, 423—made their first bow to our public during the last twelve months. One hundred and eighty were floated when the late lamented ‘boom’ in South African mining shares, which I discussed in this Review for October 1895, was in its zenith; and about the same number were children of the spring of the present year’.

²⁰ *Auckland Star*, 8 January 1897.

²¹ *Sons of Gwalia Complimentary Dinner to George W. Hall*, souvenir booklet, pp.18-19. These are listed as Alexander Wilson Castle, Percy Durant, Captain Roberts, Edward Williams, Mr Savill and John Jones; Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/5, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988.

Western Australian agent and consulting engineer. S. W. Paddon, a prominent London diamond merchant and financier, was secretary and Sir William Ingram, already linked with Morgan through the British Gold Fields, had been brought in as another major shareholder and chairman.²²

The purpose of the venture was for Pritchard Morgan to take up options on gold-mining leases and for Hall to investigate their potential for development as viable mines. The fact that Morgan was taking his daughter Katherine along attracted much newspaper comment and eventual misrepresentation; in 1931, her fabular role in the acquisition and naming of the Sons of Gwalia was quoted in the Western Australian press.²³ The press were also intrigued by this party of ‘Welshmen’ accompanying Hall; these were almost all men who had gained experience in the Gwynfynydd mine.

Hall’s speech at the launch banquet for the new Sons of Gwalia Company at the Hotel Cécil in London on 28 March 1898 set the scene. It told how, Pritchard Morgan:

...had parted with a number of his interests in Wales, and also some in Australia ... could not rest quietly in this country during what promised to be a long recess of Parliament. Accordingly, he announced one morning his intention of going to Australia. He said ‘ Hall, I am going to Western Australia; will you come along?’[...] Accordingly we arranged that we would go [...] Just at that moment Mr Paddon happened to walk into the office.²⁴

²² *Ibid.* The associated companies were the British Westralian Mines and Share Corporation, and the Union Financial Syndicate Limited, established because the original capital for the London and Westralian had been significantly over-subscribed; Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/5, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988.

²³ *Argus* (Melbourne), 4 July 1931, under the byline of J. S. Langdon. Among many other fanciful fallacies in the article was the first attribution of the ‘success’ of ‘Sons of Gwalia’ to Hoover and the suggestion that he was responsible for the £1,126,488 dividend distributed to shareholders. (In fact, by the time he left there had been no dividend, and only one was paid during the three years after his departure). The article goes on to say that Pritchard Morgan himself purchased the mine because of the enthusiastic interest of his daughter Kate in the ‘Welsh’ prospectors who had discovered it. The same inaccurate fable was printed verbatim in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 14 July 1931 and the *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 21 July 1931.

²⁴ *Sons of Gwalia Complimentary Dinner to George W. Hall*, souvenir booklet p.19; The Hotel Cécil was one of the principal assets of the Liberator Building Society, which collapsed in one of the major crashes on the London Stock Exchange in 1895. The hotel continued to prosper.

Paddon was told of their intention. He inquired if they wanted any money and suggested, ‘ “Well ... let’s put up a little team – myself and my friends.” Within two hours the money was available’.

The primary business of the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency was to function as a dealer in mines, rather than development and long-term ownership. As Bertola says:

Their [the London and Westralian] aim was to acquire leases that held the prospect of paying dividends or at least the prospect of profits at the point of company promotion. Having secured such properties, they then sought to profit by floating new companies on the London Stock Exchange.²⁵

This had always been Pritchard Morgan’s policy, both earlier in Queensland and then in Wales and other investments in Britain—make quick profits from speculative investments, and then get out. Hall may have been content to subscribe initially to this same policy, but from his comments at the Hotel Cécil launch and subsequently, as will be shown in the next chapter, he would have been against losing control of the Sons of Gwalia. This mine, he became convinced, would be the strike that made his and Pritchard Morgan’s fortunes.²⁶

On arrival in Western Australia both Morgan and Hall were interviewed by the local press, and Hall, at least, was cautious at first. Morgan had no such inhibitions and it was widely reported that he was in the market for claims; he was reported to have taken up options on over 120 leases. The *Western Argus* commented ‘The other visitors (apart from Morgan and his daughter who is unwell) will spend their time in looking over the chief mines of the field in which they are naturally interested having been mining for many years’.²⁷ It says Hall (wrongly initialled H.C. Hall) had already inspected the Great Boulder, Hannan’s Reward and other properties and was ‘so well impressed that he has advised his partner to come to Kalgoorlie’.

²⁵Patrick Bertola, ‘The Industry and Labour at the Sons of Gwalia mine’ in Lenore Layman and Crienda Fitzgerald (eds.), *110° in the Waterbag: A History of Life, Work and Leisure in Leonora, Gwalia and the Northern Goldfields* (Welshpool: Western Australian Museum and Leonora Historical Research Project, 2012), p.86.

²⁶ *Sons of Gwalia Complimentary Dinner to George W. Hall*, souvenir booklet, p.26; Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/5, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988.

²⁷ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 5 December 1895.

Already, Hall was being described as a ‘noted geologist’ in other papers.²⁸ However, Pritchard Morgan’s stay in Western Australia was brief. He and his daughter soon departed for the first of his many visits to obtain concessions in China, and following his trip to Szechuan where he signed an agreement relating to valuable trading concessions, he returned by October 1895 to his seat in Parliament.²⁹ Hall remained in Western Australia to evaluate the lease options he had taken up.

He established a London and Westralian company office in Lindsay Street, Coolgardie and was very soon interviewed by journalists on the prospects of several well-known mines, though after such a short stay in Western Australia, he can have had only a superficial knowledge of them. However, his fluent use of mining terminology and detailed knowledge of geology, together with his robust and direct manner of speaking soon made journalists think he knew his stuff. They had no problem in accepting his expertise and he was early on quoted as a mining guru. For example, fourteen months after he had arrived in Western Australia, the *Menzies Miner* described him under the headline of ‘An Expert on WA’, saying that he had arrived ‘rather prejudiced than prepossessed’ with the colony’s prospects, but having travelled across the eastern and north-eastern goldfields he was more convinced of the permanency of the fields. He had early identified the major problem as being access to fresh water for the development of the fields, and advocated boring or ‘sinking’ for water, in addition to the proposed major government scheme to pipe water to supply Kalgoorlie from Perth. ‘Once this water difficulty is settled’, according to Hall, ‘You will find Western Australia will make progress by leaps and bounds. It is unquestionably the biggest goldfield the world has seen in extent and richness’.³⁰

‘Unquestionably’ may well be considered to have been a typical Hall overstatement, but it emphasised that Hall’s commitment to these goldfields was already growing. His work-rate during this period was prodigious. Over the first seven months in Australia, apart from mines in the Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie fields, he investigated claims and mines in the Norseman goldfield well to the south, the Fraser Range and Widgiemooltha, before heading up past Ora Banda, Yerilla and

²⁸ *Australian Trading World*, 2 November 1895; *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 2 Nov 1895, among others.

²⁹ For Morgan’s Chinese activities, see chap. 6.

³⁰ *Menzies Miner*, 30 January 1897.

Niagara, out to Mount Margaret and Laverton and up as far as Lawlers in the north—an area which stretches almost 1000 km south to north through extremely inhospitable and often trackless territory. In an extensive interview for the *British Australasian*, he stated that he ‘cut the first buggy track through a great deal of this then almost unknown country’ around Lawlers, north of Mount Margaret, and that he did not purchase any mine until he could ‘grasp the conditions under which gold occurred and under which the ground could be profitably worked’. His opinion of what he found in following up Morgan’s options was that:

...generally speaking the mines are more or less patchy, but here again you encounter fairly large bodies of low-grade ores, which if we had them in Wales would be made to pay. The bulk of my gold-mining experience has been gained by dealing with low-grade proportions and this was of immense advantage to me on the field for it enabled me to establish records in a variety of way, alike in the cleanliness of milling, the cost of mining and handling, and the quantity of stuff which has been got through the mill.³¹

He also stressed one of his key themes, in Australia as previously in Wales. He said that while capable miners were well worth the £3.10s-£4 a week they were currently earning, as conditions improved and the cost of living was reduced, so they could afford to settle for a lower rate of wages; this would then make mines with lower grade ore profitable enough to work. Once more, paradoxically, Hall’s ‘concern for the working man’ was motivated by capitalist concerns. Another theme to which he returned time and again, and one of the major factors he said would lead to improved conditions, was the extension of the railway network northwards from Kalgoorlie. The line thence from Fremantle on the Western coastline had only just been completed in 1896 and the extension north to the Menzies railhead was still under construction. Echoing his remarks in Swansea where he had written in his ‘Rambler’ column of the commonality of interest of worker and owner, he said that extending the railway from Menzies northwards would, ‘make the chances of success greater for the capitalist and miner’. Certainly, his campaign throughout the period 1898-1902 for the extension of the railway to Leonora and beyond was driven not only by the need to reduce transport costs for supplies and equipment for the gold-mining industry, but also by his belief that better transport would reduce the cost of

³¹ *British Australasian*, 24 March 1898, reproduced in the *Malcolm Chronicle and Leonora Advertiser*, 21 May 1898. This was part of an extensive interview on Sons of Gwalia, but which also quizzed Hall about his travels and exploration prior to settling on that mine.

living for workers.

However, it was from the summer of 1896, the time of the first work to transform the Sons of Gwalia claim into a fully developed mine, that publicity and newspaper interest in Hall reached gold fever pitch. The launch of the Sons of Gwalia will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, but it is introduced here for what it shows about the way in which Hall, together with Morgan who was by then back in Britain, used the eagerness and enthusiasm of the press to ‘boost’ or ‘boom’ their mine. From the start, high claims for the output of first crushings, and Hall’s own assertion that the mine would be ‘another Hannan’s’ had newspaper reporters’ temperatures rising, and other mining commentators and influential speculators soon picked up the same message.³² Of course, the more publicity Hall could obtain, the better the chances of attracting the financial investment that a small and poorly-capitalized company such as the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency needed.

But it certainly helped that Hall could show evidence to newspaper reporters of reports by reputed surveyors, experts on gold processes and geologists such as Feldtmann, Diehl and Sherlaw, who had commented favourably on the mine early in 1897 in support of Hall’s ‘Hannan’s’ comparisons.³³ It was inevitable that the mine should also have come to the attention of Edward Hooper, managing agent in Western Australia for mine management and investment company Bewick, Moreing and Company Ltd. and his successor, Ernest Williams, another Welshman.³⁴ As I argue in the next chapter, the London-based company of Bewick, Moreing knew all about the Sons of Gwalia from extensive newspaper publicity orchestrated by Hall and through mine inspection reports, long before the young Herbert Hoover was to accompany Hooper to visit the mine.

³² *Malcolm Chronicle and Leonora Advertiser*, 19 March 1898, quoting the *Western Mail* (London) gives the views of Edward Hooper, of whom the newspaper said, ‘What he does not know about mining in Western Australia is scarcely worth knowing’, that ‘[Sons of Gwalia] can without exaggeration be fairly described as a second Hannan’s’.

³³ *Malcolm Chronicle and Leonora Advertiser*, 5 February 1898.

³⁴ The firm’s name, Bewick, Moreing and Company Ltd. reflects the names of the original two partners, Thomas John Bewick, an English engineer, and Charles Algernon Moreing, an Australian who took over the company when Bewick retired in the 1890s. Though the comma between their names appears incongruous, it is used throughout this thesis in the interests of accuracy, with the company name abbreviated to Bewick, Moreing.

By early 1897, Hall was ensconced in The North Star mine at Mount Malcolm, his first purchase in 1896 for Morgan's company.³⁵ This mine, under the shrewd managership of the old Gwynfynydd team of Alexander Wilson Castle and John Jones, was providing the under-funded London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency with the capital it needed for investment to make the Sons of Gwalia marketable—and Hall was always ready to be quoted in papers as diverse as the *South Wales Daily News*, *Bullionist*, *Financial Times* and *Mining Journal* on the merits of the Sons of Gwalia, which he consistently described as 'his' mine.³⁶ He was also still investigating other mines on a consultancy basis, and did not mince his words, for instance on the 'Hit or Miss' Proprietary mine on which he reported adversely on 17 January 1898.³⁷

In October 1897, the *Inquirer* devoted two full columns not only to the 6300 oz of gold produced hitherto by the Sons of Gwalia and North Star batteries but also to Hall's gardening and farming activities at North Star to feed his workers, and his views on the prospects for development of the district, of which he was already being described as 'the pioneer'.³⁸ His concern for 'his' district of Leonora was shown in an extremely lengthy article in the same month's *Coolgardie Miner* entitled 'In the Far North—a Chat with Mr George W. Hall' where he commented optimistically on the prospects of local mines, and praised the potential of the district for cultivation of crops such as vegetables and oranges. The reporter commented on the large field of corn he had planted near the mine, and ended, 'When the railway goes through, the Northern District will be much easier of access and consequently more under attention. That the latter will result is in a great measure due to the foresight, energy and pluck of Mr Hall'.³⁹ Other local papers were also very ready to pay tribute to the significant contributions Hall made towards the social capital and institutions of the newly established town of Leonora.

³⁵ *Sons of Gwalia Complimentary Dinner to George W. Hall*, souvenir booklet, p.20; Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/5, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988.

³⁶ *Australian Mail*, 24 March 1898; *South Wales Daily News*, 30 March 1898; *Financial News* (London), 30 March 1898; *Mining Journal*, *Railway and Commercial Gazette*, 2 April 1898, among many others.

³⁷ *The Critic*, August 6 1898.

³⁸ *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 29 October 1897.

³⁹ *Coolgardie Miner*, 19 October 1897.

Pritchard Morgan was busy using his position as an MP in the newspapers, too. Though he had by now departed Australia for China, the *Kalgoorlie Western Argus* quoted a letter he had sent to Chamberlain proposing a new colony, north of latitude 20° including parts of Western Australia, Queensland and Northern Territory.⁴⁰ This led in turn to a petition in the 1899-1900 period from the goldfields areas for secession from Western Australia, which was only quelled by the referendum in favour of Federation of the Australian colonies.⁴¹

Press frenzy reached a new level of intensity when the sale was announced of the Sons of Gwalia to Bewick, Moreing's exploration arm, the London and Western Australia Exploration Company, who proceeded to float the Sons of Gwalia Company.⁴² Hall loved the attention that he received, and used every opportunity to 'boom' his mine. In several celebration dinners in Malcolm and Leonora before leaving for London for the launch of the new company, he spoke at length, and the story was repeated widely. The message was always much the same, stressing his own commitment to this goldfield, his speed in identifying the richness and potential of the mine, his rapid journey to Coolgardie to buy it, the fact that he had used his own money for the purchase for London and Westralian, and that he had repaid this out of the first month's crushing.⁴³ His accounts of the richness of the ore also consistently gave a figure of over 2 oz. of 'easily milled' gold to the ton and some crushings up to 7 oz. In the oxidized upper layers of new mines, returns of 2 oz. might not be too unusual, but in stressing the similarity of the reef formation and frequency, nature and width of the lodes to the well-established and fabulously wealthy Hannan's Brownhill strike in Kalgoorlie, Hall made sure that prospects of continued success were laid before potential investors.

⁴⁰ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 10 February 1898.

⁴¹ Jonathan Ceredig Davies, *Western Australia: Its History and Progress*, p.61; *West Australian* (Perth), 18 May 1900; J.S.Battye, *Western Australia: A History from its Discovery to the Inauguration of the Commonwealth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), chap. 17, accessed from <http://www.wanowandthen.com/EBooks/battye%20WESTERN%20AUSTRALIA.pdf> pp.282-3(pdf.), 1 December 2013.

⁴² Peta Chappell, 'Fortune and failure', in Lenore Layman and Crienda Fitzgerald (eds.) *110° in the Waterbag*, p.188, '...the London and Western Australian Exploration Company Ltd, a publicly listed company controlled by Bewick Moreing and the vehicle for most of its promotional activities'.

⁴³ *Malcolm Chronicle and Leonora Advertiser*, 5 February 1898, for example, when Hall was feted in Leonora prior to his departure for England for the Sons of Gwalia Company launch.

Bewick, Moreing's future manager of the Sons of Gwalia, Herbert Hoover, was to complain early in 1898 in cables to the London company that the 'eyes were being picked out of the mine', that is, that the richest ore was being milled first. Bewick, Moreing, Coolgardie in a letter probably written by Hoover, suggested an alternative strategy of altering the size of the tonnage produced to the American short ton, which, at 2000 ponds was 240 pounds less; basically this would have made the ore per ton appear richer.⁴⁴ By doing this, Castle would show improved gold production for potential shareholders, and thus ensure maximum publicity; however Castle was not prepared to act, and it was not until the end of May that this subterfuge was introduced by Hoover. Castle was also stockpiling large stocks of ore for processing when a cyanide plant had been established to deal with the tailings; in the meantime, the potential yield of the tailings was also included in any figures released.

Castle himself, though not seeking publicity in the same way that Hall did, was also feted; at the North Star and Sons of Gwalia Christmas dinner in his honour in Malcolm in December 1897, the chairman toasted the 'Guest of the Evening', 'stating that the success of the mine was largely due to that gentleman's ability as a manager. It was possible for a man to make the most of a bad mine, but lots of men would make a mess of a good one'. He was described as 'loved and respected' by his staff.⁴⁵ At another Leonora banquet on 1 July 1898 prior to his leaving for a well-earned visit to his family in Wales, fulsome tribute was paid to his managership of Sons of Gwalia, and subsequently opening up the Star of Gwalia south of the Sons of Gwalia lease, for which he had applied the previous December.⁴⁶ He was also presented with a gold watch and an illuminated address at a dinner in Malcolm presided over by Warden Burt, the governmental arbiter on all matters in the Mount Margaret goldfield.

Hall, who had returned to Western Australia on 20 January 1898 after Christmas with his family in Adelaide, was also feted at a Leonora banquet in his honour before leaving for the company launch in London:

⁴⁴ Battye Library, MN 0294/1, Acc. 4793A/1, Bewick, Moreing letter to Castle, 28 February 1898; Battye Library, MN 270, microfilm 1460A, Sons of Gwalia Letterbook, May 31, 1898, page 207.

⁴⁵ *Malcolm Chronicle and Leonora Advertiser*, 30 December 1897.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 2 July 1898; 3 December 1897.

Mr Hall, responding to the toast of his health said he was never more surprised in his life when they discovered that they had organised a reception committee to give a banquet to welcome his return, and he began to wonder what he had done to merit such a reception, as he was not personally acquainted with many of the townspeople of Leonora... He then began to remember a few little things he had been able to do for the place. He asked them not to thank him for having opened a mine in their midst (laughter). In bringing his energies to opening up the Sons of Gwalia he was not actuated by any philanthropic motives. The mines were opened up as a speculation—as a means of profit.⁴⁷

He stated that he had been specifically instructed by the London and Westralian not to purchase the stamp battery or develop the mine, and said that he had been told that if he did so, he must find the wherewithal from his own funds. He then referred to the development of Leonora's facilities, alluding to his negotiations with Post Office officials and the Minister to establish a post and telegraph office for the town through a £2000 grant for civic amenities, and stressing the ignorance of Perth-based officials of the importance of the district. He emphasised that what he had done could be done for other gold-mining communities if they were properly represented in Perth. His theme was the same as always—stressing his commitment to the north-eastern goldfields and the need for proper legislative representation for the Mount Margaret field.⁴⁸ This was also to be the basis of his later election platform. He also echoed Herbert Hoover's later emphasis in the Sons of Gwalia, saying:

Low grade mines compel the exercise of economy, and economy was of the greatest benefit to capital and labour. If the townspeople of Leonora had any pluck they would take up these low grade mines and if they proved payable they would very soon have people after them to purchase them.... Flotation did not make a mine; it was a question of production and profits.⁴⁹

The peak of public attention for Hall was undoubtedly the first Hotel Cécil 'Complimentary Dinner' in his honour on 28 March 1898, which attracted universal newspaper attention. There is no doubt that at this time in London, Hall was one of the turn-of-the-century's equivalents of the present day's 'media stars', whose fame depends as much on effective publicity as on any personal accomplishment. But Hall really did have something very tangible to show, and his bravura speech on the night

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 5 February 1898.

⁴⁸ *The Cambrian* (Swansea), 5 October 1900. Hall recalled how Sir Edward Wittenoom, by then the Agent-General for Western Australia, who was present at this Hotel Cécil dinner, had assisted him in the Legislature in obtaining a telegraph post office for Mount Malcolm.

⁴⁹ *Malcolm Chronicle and Leonora Advertiser*, 5 February 1898; See also chap. 5.

‘distinguished at the same time by its high literary tone and the importance of the subject’ attracted the widest media coverage. The *Financial News* (London) in particular carried an extensive article quoting in their entirety all the speeches at the dinner.

Hall was described in the *Mining Journal* as ‘a man in every way qualified by temperament, knowledge and experience to stand the climate and drawbacks of such a country, to know a good mine when he saw it, to seize every favourable opportunity as it presented itself and to make a good bargain on sound business principles’.⁵⁰ The paper went on to say ‘Knowing Mr Hall intimately, we have much faith in his judgement, and it is a gratification to know that such success has attended him in his exploratory labours in Western Australia’ and remarked that Sons of Gwalia was only the first of other properties where he had achieved comparable results.

Though Hall was the ostensible focus of the ‘complimentary dinner’, the real reason for the occasion was of course the ‘launch’ for the new Sons of Gwalia Company, floated by the new owners, the London and Western Australian Exploration Company.⁵¹ The attendance of significant numbers of MPs at the banquet, including fellow Welshman, the increasingly influential David Lloyd George, was in many ways less important than the attendance of a host of journalists. Among those seated at table were representatives of the major London press and mining journals who in following days carried extensive accounts of the speeches at the dinner. The lavishly decorated gold-leaf souvenir booklet of the dinner, produced by Morgan’s companies, was issued by early May, and quoted in full Hall’s account of the discovery, and, possibly more significantly to potential shareholders, confirmed an average yield, of 2 oz 13 dwts. to the ton over the 11 months since first crushing.

Hall’s words at this event show his outstanding ability to hold an audience and to ‘sell’ the venture before the assembled dignitaries and press. He rejoiced in his moment of glory and the fact that the focus was entirely on him: ‘I have controlled that mine since the days of its infancy until the present moment and I am just going to resign charge of it to those who purchased it’, and ‘I was the first in the field. I did

⁵⁰*Mining Journal, Railway and Commercial Gazette*, 2 April 1898.

⁵¹ See chap. 5 for more details.

the bulk of the prospecting work and I think the man who is there first has the right to pick and choose’.

He said, tellingly:

Neither myself or those with whom I am associated—my directors—care about acting in the capacity of company promoters. What we are doing is simply mining. We are proving mines and when we have proved them we say, “Here you are. Give us the best price you can for them. Or if necessary it is quite possible we may keep a couple for ourselves, as we ought to have done with the Sons of Gwalia (Cheers and a voice “Why did you sell it?”) Someone asks why I sold it. Had I been consulted it would not have been sold. (Cheers).

His oratory clearly struck home; from then on, this speech, and the subsequent newspaper reports that quoted it extensively, were the sources to which journalists over subsequent years regularly returned on any matter relating to the Sons of Gwalia. The fact that between them, Bewick, Moreing and Morgan’s companies had taken up all the issued stock (though only a portion of the share price had been called up) made the prospects so much more attractive that immediately following the launch, the value of the shares more than doubled, enabling the stockholding companies immediately to start to take profits from the premiums.⁵² Thus it is clear that the companies involved were colluding to boost mine share values artificially; the very practice that Hall objected to so much in his newspaper statements was that from which he himself was to benefit so significantly.

As the earlier quotation from Hall’s speech shows, it was clear that Hall from the start, unlike Pritchard Morgan and the other directors of the London and Westralian, had been opposed to losing control of the Sons of Gwalia to Bewick, Moreing. Indeed he was to continue to voice his objections even two years later, on his return to London. At a special London and Westralian meeting called to hear a report from Hall, just as shareholders were applauding him for the riches he had brought them, a ‘spirited altercation’ on Hall’s objections to the sale occurred between him and company chairman Sir William Ingram MP.⁵³ It has to be

⁵² See chap. 5 for more detail on share dealing.

⁵³ *Mining Journal, Railway and Commercial Gazette*, 2 September 1900. ‘Directors in London, when they had an offer of £50,000 in cash and £100,000 in shares thought they had an exceptionally lucrative proposition. Unfortunately they did not consult me, or the probability is

acknowledged that mine management, rather than development, would have been a new field of activity for the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency and whether they had the capability to attract funding and to set up the economic processes of running the mine long term must also be doubtful. However, Hall clearly believed in the mine, not only as a short-term source of immediate riches but as an opportunity for himself, and his manager Castle, to show their capability to run and develop it themselves.

While in London between March and late August 1898, Hall was not only busy with raising capital for his newest leases. He was frequently quoted in London and Australian newspapers on a range of subjects other than the Sons of Gwalia. But it was the status that the Sons of Gwalia brought him that ensured that whatever his subject, he could be sure of newspaper coverage. At company meetings he was in his element, and the shareholders lapped it up.⁵⁴ His comments to the first meeting of the new 'Sons of Gwalia' company on 7 May 1898 exemplified his ability to manipulate the facts, and his persuasive oratory. Introduced by Edward Hooper, the Bewick, Moreing partner who had been company agent for Western Australia and who had been instrumental in the recommendation to purchase, he said:

So if you take your present milling capacity with the cyanide plant, you will be earning at present something like 33 per cent on the capital of your company, and this, bear in mind, is after the mine has been only 18 months in operation or about 12 months in actual operation. Consequently, in that short time, you have developed a really fine dividend-paying mine if you only have the necessary plant to extract the gold from the ores you are mining monthly (Cheers). At the present time you are devoting the bulk of your attention to the northern end of the property, and rightly so, because there you can treat the stuff cheaper than anywhere else. You have a splendid main shaft, well timbered, and one of the best winding plants in the whole field. I think Mr Hooper will bear me out in that.⁵⁵

that we should have retained the 'Sons of Gwalia' ; previously also *British Australasian*, 24 March 1898.

⁵⁴ *Mining World*, 9 July 1898 gives an account of the 5 July extraordinary meeting of the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency, regarding amalgamation of that company with the British Westralian Mines and Share Corporation, and Hall's bravura presentation of the flotation of the Star of Gwalia Company Ltd.

⁵⁵ Reported in both the subsequent *Capitalist* and the *Mining World* (n.d cuttings in Ms /Hall, G.W., RGSSA); also Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/6, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988.

By repeating ‘You’, he involved the shareholders completely as participants in a process where, in fact, they had to trust Hall to act on their behalf. There is no doubt that Hall was an excellent salesman; much of his optimistic forecast (like the gold production statistics presented at the banquet launch of the company), was based upon a cyanide plant that was not yet in operation. It is also noteworthy that Hoover upon taking over as manager had immediately wished to cease production in order to start relocating the main shaft, but was prevented by his own principals who were concerned with keeping up the value of production.

Later in the same meeting Hall’s words were:

I am perfectly confident that in days to come the whole expense of that mine will be covered by £1 a ton. I do not generally act as a prophet and never prophesy unless I know, but considering that with a 10-head mill we have reduced our expenses during one month to 26s a ton mining, milling and wear and tear all charged—if that can be done with an old-fashioned 10-stamp mill, what can you do with a 200-stamp mill supplied with every modern arrangement?

It was to be a further four years before even a 50-stamp battery was in operation.

Hall had another reason for ‘booming’ the Sons of Gwalia. A major purpose of his six months’ sojourn in London was to raise capital for the adjacent claims, which he had pegged out south of the Sons of Gwalia, and where Alexander Castle had already started work. Even at the launch dinner, Hall referred to their prospects, and in addition to the 168 acres of Sons of Gwalia delineated on the souvenir booklet’s map, four other properties, the Star of Gwalia, Prince of Gwalia, Pride of Gwalia and Daughters of Gwalia were all outlined in gold leaf there, with the purported line of the gold reef running through them from the Sons of Gwalia. This was picked up by the extensive newspaper publicity on the coat-tails of the Sons of Gwalia launch. The result was that even in market conditions that Hall later described as ‘dead’, by the time he had returned to Western Australia in October 1898, he had £50,000 of capital each committed to the first two of the leases to be developed, the Star of Gwalia and the Prince of Gwalia.⁵⁶ Even at the launch dinner, he had confirmed that the Star of Gwalia share issue was already oversubscribed; clear

⁵⁶ *Western Australian Goldfields Courier*, 29 October 1898.

testimony of the marketing capability of Hall and the media popularity of the Sons of Gwalia.⁵⁷

At the Hotel Cécil launch dinner, the chairman had praised Hall's opposition to 'the large numbers of reckless company promoters who deluge the country with glowing descriptions of worthless properties' and his insistence that any property sold should be fully proven before offer. At another dinner at the Princes Restaurant in London in July 1898 when Hall was again guest of honour, and he was presented with a pastel portrait of himself, chairman Sir William Ingram described him as 'one of the most able, most conscientious and most truthful of mining engineers'. This would have been said consciously in contrast to many other mining engineers of the time, who so often had a reputation for exaggerating the value of their claims.⁵⁸ Hall himself had a large personal interest in the Sons of Gwalia even after its sale, having initially registered three of the 24-acre leases in his own name; thus he would have been personally entitled to a substantial allocation of the shares and cash.⁵⁹

In a revealing interview on Hall's return to Coolgardie he stressed the uneasiness of investors about claim jumping, the Western Australian Government's ambivalent response to the alluvial problem and the competing claims for capital from the Rand in South Africa, Klondyke and others.⁶⁰ In particular he noted that there were few of the ordinary investing public who bought Western Australian mine shares on the London market; rather it was the big financiers who were manipulating the market, and most of them had more paper shares than cash available. Typically positive, however, Hall suggested that the increased returns and better management now to be found in Western Australia would re-establish investor confidence.

As I noted earlier in the chapter, from his first arrival in the colony, and increasingly so when he was based in Malcolm, Hall had stressed the vital need to extend the railhead from Menzies first to Malcolm and then on to Leonora. On his

⁵⁷ *Money*, June 8 1898; *City Leader* (London), 18 June 1898; *Morning*, June 18 1898; *Financial Times*, 6 July 1898; *Mining World*, 11 July 1898, among many others, confirm this.

⁵⁸ Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/6, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988 (cuttings collected by Frank Hall, G.W. Hall's son); *Financial Times*, 8 July 1898; *South Wales Daily News*, 9 July 1898.

⁵⁹ State Record Office of Western Australia, Perth, transfer of lease covenant, Sons of Gwalia, consignment 964, 1896/05705.

⁶⁰ *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 28 October 1898.

way to Perth and London in February 1898 he lobbied Sir John Forrest's State government to implement this. He reported to the Malcolm Progress Committee—and of course to the *Malcolm Chronicle*—that he was pressing once more for a commitment to this railway after a meeting with Mr Franklyn H. Piesse, the Minister for Transport.⁶¹ On his return, the major theme of his speech at the Mount Malcolm banquet welcoming him home was his regret that the project had been shelved, that he had interviewed the Premier in Perth, and had pointed out to the potential savings on the Menzies water bill by bringing the railway up to Malcolm, a region where water was plentiful enough to supply the other towns along the line.⁶² His major concern was of course to reduce transport costs into the mining area both for equipment and mining supplies, particularly wood for timbering the mine, but he also stressed once more the advantage it would bring to the working man, in reducing the cost of living; also of course, as a consequence of such reduction, being able to bring down the high wages he was having to pay.

His campaign for the railway intensified when he chaired a banquet for the Minister of Mines, H.B. Lefroy in Leonora in February 1899, on the first visit by a Cabinet Minister to the town.⁶³ This was followed up when the Premier of Western Australia, Sir John Forrest visited the Mount Margaret Goldfield at the beginning of April 1899, on a six-day return visit that encompassed the sites of his pioneering survey expedition thirty years previously. Hall ensured that this visit was exhaustively reported across the Western Australian press, not least the fact that during their stay in Mount Malcolm 'the Premier and Mr A.E. Morgans MLA were the guests of Mr G.W. Hall, whose name is largely connected with mining in this colony'.⁶⁴ They were accommodated for over half their visit at Hall's quarters at the North Star mine, taken by Hall on a picnic to Mount Malcolm which Forrest had named on his previous visit and entertained by him to dinner on two occasions; Hall chaired and, as one would expect, spoke on both occasions.⁶⁵ He also entertained the gatherings with his 'glee

⁶¹ *Malcolm Chronicle and Leonora Advertiser*, 12 February 1898. Hall on his way through Perth for London had wired the Malcolm Progress Committee to say that Mr Piesse had promised to visit Malcolm after the opening of the Menzies railway with a view to its continuing through to Malcolm.

⁶² *West Australian*, 9 November 1898; *Western Mail* (Perth), 11 November 1898.

⁶³ *Western Mail* (Perth), 3 February 1899.

⁶⁴ *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 21 April 1899, 'Our Goldfields No. 6'.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 21 April 1899.

club', which featured his duets with John Jones, Castle's successor at North Star. Other members of Forrest's party included Archibald Earle Burt, Chief Warden of the Mount Margaret Goldfield, and the powerful Coolgardie MLA, fellow Welshman Alfred E. Morgans, who was the motivating force behind the Westralia Mount Morgans mine. Hall clearly mixed on equal terms with the most influential people in the state.⁶⁶ He was also a prominent speaker at the highlight event of Forrest's visit. This was the famous 'Gold Bar' lunch, held at the Sons of Gwalia mine manager's new residence on 3 April 1899. At this meal, Sons of Gwalia manager Harry James had piled up 500 ozs of ingots, forming the entire previous month's gold production at the mine, on the corners of the dining table.

Between the 14, 21 and 28 April editions, the *Perth Inquirer* devoted over 15,000 words to its correspondent RHK's account, in nine parts, of every detail of the tour. It is clear from this account that Hall had won over RHK who commented as follows: 'He [Hall] was one of the first men to realize the value of the district and he purchased and pegged out a number of very rich leases'. RHK then regretted that Hall had sold Sons of Gwalia as 'had he remained in charge, the mine would not have been allowed to go on working for so long with only ten head of stamps when it could easily have kept 50 head running three shafts'. Hall was clearly regarded as the major player in Forrest's tour and used every opportunity to further the cause of the district and the goldfield.⁶⁷ For example, after a deputation had presented the case for the railway to the goldfield to the politicians, Hall extracted a public commitment from Forrest that the railway would indeed be extended to Malcolm and Leonora, and Forrest confirmed this on his return to Coolgardie on 7 April.⁶⁸ On his return to London in 1900, Hall stated that the rails were currently being delivered and forecast that the railway would reach Malcolm in six to nine months.⁶⁹ Despite being further delayed by opposition in the State legislature, notably from Alfred Morgans, who wanted the line to go east from Malcolm to Laverton for his own mine at Mount Morgans, the railway finally reached Leonora in 1902 with consequent significant

⁶⁶ *The Cambrian* (Swansea), 2 June 1899.

⁶⁷ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 5 April 1899; *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 21 April 1899.

⁶⁸ *Western Mail* (Perth), Friday 7 April 1899; *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 14 April 1899; *The Clarence River Advocate* (NSW), Friday 5 May 1899.

⁶⁹ *Mining Journal, Railway and Commercial Gazette*, 2 September 1900.

savings in hauling mining equipment and supplies to the Sons of Gwalia.⁷⁰ It is noteworthy that Hall's efforts nullified a concurrent Legislature campaign in which Bewick, Moreing played no small part, to have the railway to the North routed through Cue and the East Murchison field, a major centre of Bewick, Moreing's activities. Despite Alfred Morgans' previous campaign, Hall magnanimously continued the fight for an extension from Malcolm to the Mount Morgans mines and Laverton. He also supported George Taylor's proposal for a line north of Leonora to Lawlers, where he had mine interests, though the Government despite repeated commitments, failed to implement this, and opted for a connection from Sandstone instead.⁷¹ Hall's efforts certainly contributed significantly to transformation of travel opportunities and opening up the hitherto inaccessible Mount Margaret goldfields.

Another of the campaigns to which Hall lent his vocal support in the London and Australian newspapers during his 1898 London sojourn, was the vexed question of dual title to gold claims. Under the Mining Act of 1895, a man with a mining licence could extract alluvial gold to the depth of 10 ft even from a claim registered with a company, as long as that company was not currently working it.⁷² The mining companies were fiercely opposed to this practice, which as they saw it, robbed them of the more easily accessible oxidised gold.⁷³ Hall was an articulate spokesperson for them in lobbying the legislature that dual title was in effect free licence to claim-jump, and that it inhibited the flow of capital to leases that should be developed in Western Australia.⁷⁴ In London, whose financial manipulators of course had major influence on colonial matters, Hall again addressed meetings between March and July 1898 on the dual title issue, which were extensively reported in both Britain and Australia.⁷⁵ In Hall's words, 'A dual title to one piece of land is as absurd as a dual

⁷⁰ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 30 August 1900; *West Australian*, 1 September 1901. George Taylor MLA was on the horns of a dilemma which to support, but finally opted for Leonora, with a line to Laverton to follow.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 29 August 1911; *Geraldton Guardian*, 14 September 1909.

⁷² F.K. Crowley, *Australia's Western Third* (London and University of Western Australia: Macmillan, 1960), pp.132-133.

⁷³ J.S. Battye, *Western Australia* pp.282-3(pdf.).

⁷⁴ These disputes are covered extensively in D. Mossenson, 'Mining Regulations and Alluvial Disputes 1894-1904', *Journal of the Historical Society of Western Australia* 1955. See also J. Bastin, 'The West Australian Goldfields 1892-1900: Investors and their Grievances', *Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand* vol.6, no.23 (November 1954)

⁷⁵ *Bullionist*, 25 May 1898; *Finance*, 28 May 1898, among many others.

The tough alluvial prospectors were understandably aggrieved at the prospect of losing their opportunities for surface mining on profitable claims. Serious disturbances hit Coolgardie and

title to a wife; in both cases it would lead to considerable unpleasantness'. At the London Chamber of Mines in May 1898, Hall seconded the motion calling on Premier Forrest to abolish dual title, and the Royal Commission on Mines that reported in June of that year called for the same conclusion.

This chapter has shown how George Hall, a newspaper editor turned geological surveyor, with limited direct mining experience, had, from his first arrival in Australia, used the media to promote himself as a mining expert. It tells us more about the practices of the time in the North Eastern part of the Western Australian goldfields, and Hall's major role in developing the Mount Margaret goldfield. Within three years he was acknowledged in the press as the undoubted pioneer of that goldfield, a man who had not only opened up the mining potential but had also contributed significantly to the growth of the towns and communities that served the area. His ability to use the press and his familiarity with its methods resulted in his being able to 'boom' and 'boost' the rich strike he had purchased at the Sons of Gwalia into a marketable mining property, to use the London press, as much as the Australian newspapers, to ensure a successful flotation for the Sons of Gwalia Company, and to use his new reputation to gain capital for the other adjacent leases that he had staked out. The chapter has also touched on the ambiguities of his position, as a 'friend of the workers' who still saw no contradiction in suggesting that if railways brought down living costs, it could also mean that workers wages could be lowered.

The next chapter focuses in more detail on the acquisition of the Sons of Gwalia mine. It uses not only information from contemporary newspaper reports, but a great deal of information from extensive documentation held mainly in the files of Bewick, Moreing, the company which was responsible in 1898 for launching the flotation of the Sons of Gwalia Company. This confirms George W. Hall, not only as a media personality, but as one of the pre-eminent mining figures in the north-eastern goldfields at this period of Western Australian history.

Kalgoorlie, including Sir John Forrest being booed, threatened and manhandled by the rioting mob, before the matter was allayed, though not fully resolved for a further decade and more.

Chapter 5

Hall and the Sons of Gwalia

Richard Wyn Jones in a recent lecture said, ‘Every organisation has its establishment myth’, and this is certainly true of the Sons of Gwalia mine, Leonora, on the Mount Margaret gold-field, which was until the modern gold mining era the second most productive and longest-lived continuously operated mine in the Western Australian goldfields.¹

The chapter examines the key event of George W. Hall’s life, focussing mainly on the crucial period from 1896 to 1898 and his role in the purchase, development and flotation of this mine. There is no doubt that this was his most significant contribution to Western Australian mining history. The chapter also develops analysis in the previous chapter of the role of the newspapers in Australia and London in this event and their depiction of George Hall as a press personality, a prominent social and political figure and a well-regarded mining expert. It echoes previous references to his role in Malcolm and neighbouring Leonora at the time, confirms the part he played in the development of the Sons of Gwalia, and examines his role subsequent to its sale, inspecting it for the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency. It also enlarges on a theme introduced in the previous chapter, how the London and Westralian cooperated with Bewick, Moreing’s London and Western Australian Exploration Company and its offspring, the Sons of Gwalia Company Limited, to ‘boom’ the mine’s flotation, and maximise profits from investment speculation, rather than from production. This chapter is key to an understanding of George W. Hall’s status in the development not only of this mine but also the whole surrounding Mount Margaret goldfield—as he said, ‘I was first in the field’. It also shows the effect this had on his public credibility in Western Australia, and on his fortunes and future.²

¹ Richard Wyn Jones, Lecture, Penarth, 7 January 2014, ‘Penarth’s secret role in the establishment of Plaid Cymru’.

² *Sons of Gwalia Complimentary Dinner to George W. Hall*, souvenir booklet, George Hall’s speech, p.26; Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/5, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988.

Of necessity, the chapter also reassesses the role of Herbert C. Hoover in relation to the Sons of Gwalia, since in many ways it is only by counterpointing Hoover with Hall that one can restore some of the balance between their respective roles in the key period of 1897 to 1900. A great deal has been written retrospectively about Hoover's role in Australian mining; in contrast virtually nothing has been produced on Hall since his death. This thesis argues that an analysis of their respective involvements shows what an important contribution Hall made to the development of gold-mining in Western Australia and to the historiography of Welsh involvement in Australian mining history.

Many of the very earliest facts about the mine are not in dispute and are outlined below. The Sons of Gwalia leases, initially one block of 24 acres, had been pegged out by prospectors Carlson, White and Glendinning on 28 May, 1896.³ These were acting on behalf of a consortium of Welshmen who had held a meeting in 1895 at the National Eisteddfod of Wales in Llanelli, led by Thomas Tobias, shopkeeper in Coolgardie, who had gone home to visit Wales at that time.⁴ The backers had each agreed to contribute £200 to the venture that Tobias and his brother and partner Ernest had initiated. When Tobias had expended £500 on equipping the expedition, he attempted to contact the backers for their contributions, only for the secretary of the syndicate, who later became High Sheriff of Carmarthenshire, to pour cold water on the venture, and the group reneged on their agreement. The three prospectors agreed to continue their efforts on the basis of a renegotiated share of any profits with the Tobias brothers, but Thomas Tobias wanted his money back and was eager to sell any claim that ensued.

The 'complimentary dinner' of 28 March 1898 at the Hotel Cécil in London, though ostensibly to celebrate George Hall's return to Britain, also served, as I have indicated in the previous chapter, to influence the press into giving publicity to the launch of Sons of Gwalia and boosting its share value. Hall's masterly speech on that occasion would have been excellent 'copy' for the nine or more major newspapers

³ C.W.F. Turnbull, *Looking Back, Gwalia-Leonora 1895-1963* (Leonora Gwalia Historical Museum, 1990-2006), pp.2-3 gives the date as 2 June. The lease document 4263 (later 190), gives the pegging date as 28 May and the registration date as 2 June. Block 4326 (later 207) was added within a month but was not registered until later.

⁴ *Sunday Times* (Perth), 26 November 1929; 8 March 1936.

and mining journals represented at the dinner, including the *Sunday Times*, the *London Standard*, the *Mining World*, *News of the World*, the *Australian Trading World*, and the *British Australasian* (which, though printed in London, had great influence in Australia and whose articles were always quoted extensively by local newspapers across that country). At this banquet, Hall's speech referred to his having spent six months investigating leases before he purchased any mine. His first purchase, which was being worked by July 1896, had been the North Star, at Malcolm, which he described as a consistent mine which would pay respectable dividends.⁵ Then, while examining poor quality 'shows' further north, he had heard at a campfire one bitterly cold night about the Sons of Gwalia in the Leonora area. He was attracted by the connection of the name to his native Wales, and went to examine it; indeed, it was the last of all the claims that he was investigating on this expedition.⁶ Jack Carlson, one of the prospectors who discovered the reef, said years later that they were down about 18 feet at the time, but that the nearest public crusher was 64 miles away in Menzies, so the claim could not at that stage have been considered a developed 'mine'.⁷

In July 1896, Hall visited the claim and sampled the ore, testing it at his North Star mine, which was not far away. He was immediately convinced of its great potential; and because of the similarities of the rock formation considered it could be 'another Hannan's'.⁸ This expression as a description of the Sons of Gwalia was to recur time and again in the contemporary press throughout 1897 and 1898, as well as in Western Australian Department of Mines' reports, and obviously created widespread interest and exposure; the wording was also echoed in the 1897 Bewick, Moreing report that prompted the purchase of the mine.

Hall had immediately travelled overnight by horse and trap to Menzies, to catch the coach for the gruelling 100-mile journey to Coolgardie, where he made an

⁵ *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 3 July 1896.

⁶ 'Gwalia' from the mediaeval Latin 'Wallia', was frequently used in the 19th century as an archaic and poetic name for Wales.

⁷ *Sunday Times* (Perth), 29 June 1941, and 12 November 1944.

⁸ The Hannan's Brownhill Gold Mine company in Kalgoorlie was the first major successful flotation of Moreing's London and Western Australian Exploration Company Limited, formed in 1894. It was at the time considered the outstanding and best-known strike in Western Australia.

offer to Tobias, initially of £2000.⁹ The shopkeeper wanted £10,000, but eventually the claim was purchased for £5000, of which the down payment was £2000. The purchase was completed on 13 August 1896, though the Department of Mines has an earlier date for transfer of the lease.¹⁰ Hall made it clear in his speech that, even though he was operating on behalf of the London and Westralian and its related companies, this was his own action and decision, and his own money that was used to make the purchase and to pay for the equipment installed. It was certainly not purchased as one of the futile lease options acquired by Pritchard Morgan, who, by this time had long left Australia to pursue his Chinese interests, leaving Hall in charge. Indeed, a study of the Sons of Gwalia leases themselves further showed Hall's initiative and enterprise. Of the seven 24-acre plots subsequently sold to Bewick, Moreing, Hall had only bought from Tobias blocks 190 and 207, the original claims, in the names of the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency. However, he also pegged out in his own name three further adjacent blocks on the southerly line of the lode and two further blocks in the name of Alexander Wilson Castle. Thus both he and his associate Castle would become major beneficiaries from any future sale of the mine.¹¹

Castle, a Scotsman from Fyvie near Aberdeen, who had married Deborah Owen, daughter of a Welsh alluvial prospector from near the Gwynfynydd mine, was a highly experienced mining man, both as an erection engineer and as a mine manager. He had previously been employed in both these capacities at the Gwynfynydd mine near Dolgellau, North Wales until 1894, during the period when Hall was company secretary of the British Gold Fields Company, which owned that mine.¹² Before then, according to his grand-daughter Deborah Watkins, he had become a naturalised citizen of the USA while working as an erection engineer for mining equipment manufacturers Fraser and Chalmers in the Rockies, Nevada and

⁹ *Sons of Gwalia Complimentary Dinner to George W. Hall*, souvenir booklet, George Hall's speech, p.23; Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/5, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988. However, Jack Carlson, *Sunday Times* (Perth), 29 June 1941, remembers the sum as £6000, which was split between the three prospectors and the two Tobias brothers, according to their agreement after the Welsh syndicate collapsed.

¹⁰ John Hamill, *The Strange Career of Mr Hoover under two Flags* (New York: William Faro, 1931) p.44; State Record Office, Transfer of lease covenant, Sons of Gwalia, consignment 964, file 1896/5705.

¹¹ State Record Office, Perth, consignment 964, file 1896/5705.

¹² See chap. 3.

Colorado and California.¹³ He also accrued vast experience in Ecuador, Swaziland and Canada.¹⁴ Castle had arrived at Albany in June 1895, and worked either directly, or on a management contract for Fraser and Chalmers, as manager for another Welsh entrepreneur, Llewellyn Williams, at the Cardiff Castle or the nearby New Mount Morgan mine, Widgiemooltha. There is no doubt that it was on one of his early southward journeys with John Jones that George W. Hall re-met and recruited his old colleague from his Gwynfynydd period.¹⁵ It was Castle who had installed a ten-stamp mill at the North Star mine in Malcolm when Hall purchased that mine in 1896—the only one of Morgan’s lease options that had proved worth exploiting. Castle became manager of North Star in March 1896.¹⁶

He and Hall were the ideal partnership, Castle, the older, experienced mining man and a tough negotiator on contracts, but popular with his workers, was happy to stay in the background and get on with the work. Complementing this, Hall, the very capable geologist, was in contrast an outgoing and sociable entrepreneurial personality who was adept in publicising both the mine and himself to attract the necessary finance. These two worked together on Hall’s various enterprises until 1905 when the partnership was broken by Castle’s untimely death. Hall very soon moved him in as first manager of the Sons of Gwalia, and it was Castle who supervised the removal and reinstallation of the second-hand ten-stamp mill and the Berdan and Wheeler pans that Hall had bought from Widgiemooltha, where the rush had evaporated almost as suddenly as it had developed. Castle soon erected a headframe for the Sons of Gwalia main shaft, and from June 1897 onward the mine employed a work-force of up to 110 men.

It is clear that Hall was aware immediately after his purchase of the seven-lease 168-acre block that a major injection of capital and machinery was needed.

¹³ *Western Ancestor, Journal of the Western Australian Genealogical Society*, March 1988 pp.18-19, under the name of Coral Haymet, plagiarized from the work of Deborah Watkins.

¹⁴ Denis A. Cumming and Richard G. Hartley, *Westralian Founders of Twentieth Century Mining: Career Biographies of Mining Engineers, Mine Managers and Metallurgists who worked in the Westralian Mining Industry 1890-1920* (Rossmoyne, WA: Richard G. Hartley, 2014); letter sent by Deborah Watkins to G. W. Hall, Ludlow, president of the Welsh Mining History Society, 14 February 1983.

¹⁵ <http://www.mindat.org/loc-203748.html> website of Jolyon Ralph, accessed 1 December 2013.

¹⁶ Deborah Watkins, family history monograph.

Though early crushing was at North Star mine, which was also providing Hall and the London and Westralian with a valuable source of finance to capitalize equipment for the Sons of Gwalia, Castle soon brought into action the battery that Hall bought, with his own money and against his directors' specific orders. In August 1897 the first trial crushing of 780 tons at the mine produced 727 oz.¹⁷ The early yield even with this antiquated battery, was outstanding, with a total of 3847 tons treated for a return of 5667 oz. valued at £22,000, and for a yield of 115/11 a ton.¹⁸ The gold ore was very soft, and Hall says that they set records, crushing more than many 20 and 30 stamp batteries. At the Hotel Cécil launch dinner he described the reef as 'the longest shoot of consistent pay ore I have seen in the whole of the Western Australian field,' and said that he paid off his personal commitment of £8000 for the purchase and the equipment within the first month with 2,010 oz. of gold.¹⁹

Though the gold ore was always described as 'soft and easily milled', Hall knew that the antiquated stamp mill he had purchased was inadequate for the full development of the mine. The treatment process for extraction from the tailings needed a decision on further equipment including a cyanidisation plant which would be needed to treat the 'slimes', particularly as the shaft descended below the oxidised easy-to-access ore and entered the sulphided lower levels of the reef.²⁰ The *Coolgardie Miner* suggested that it was 'quite within the range that the Gwalia will see the first 100 stamp mill in the colony', and Hall was even quoted in Coolgardie newspapers as saying that a 200 stamp crusher might be needed.²¹ It was because of this need for further equipment and capital that Hall, the London and Westralian consulting engineer, and W. Pritchard Morgan, its agent and major shareholder, in late 1896 initiated an approach to the company's representative in London, Messrs. Birkbeck, Hoffmann and Jowett, to seek additional capital in the London market.²²

¹⁷ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 12 August 1897.

¹⁸ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 1 April 1913.

¹⁹ *Sons of Gwalia Complimentary Dinner to George W. Hall*, souvenir booklet, George Hall's speech, p.25; Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/5, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988.

²⁰ Finely crushed particles of ore, with water added, which would be subjected to chemical reaction to release the gold that impregnated the rock.

²¹ *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 29 October, 1897, quoting *Coolgardie Miner* (n.d.).

²² *Kalgoorlie Miner*, Saturday 29 March 1913; *Sons of Gwalia Complimentary Dinner to George W. Hall*, souvenir booklet, George Hall's speech, p.25; Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/5, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988.

It should be stressed at this point that the Sons of Gwalia had already attracted considerable attention across the goldfields, and throughout Western Australia. The official Department of Mines report for 1897 describes it as ‘a splendid property, by far the best in this goldfield,’ and this is echoed in several contemporary newspaper reports.²³ The report showed that Sons of Gwalia produced 77% of the gold produced in the whole of the Mount Malcolm District in 1897, and it was as a result of its importance that the goldfields were reorganized, a new Mount Margaret goldfield being designated, with Sons of Gwalia as its principal mine.

It was only at this stage that Bewick, Moreing entered the Sons of Gwalia scene. The London-based company, with Charles Moreing, as its principal, was active in the Western Australian boom of 1894-6 as consulting engineers for mining companies and by mid-1897 were acting in that capacity for 64 such companies in Western Australia.²⁴ Not only did they provide consultancy services, but were moving increasingly into mine management of the companies that they advised, and also purchased mines that they managed for companies that they themselves established. Their representatives in Western Australia until early 1898 were agent Edward Hooper, later a partner in the company, and Alexander (later Sir Alexander) Matheson, a Perth financier and mine machinery seller, who was also a Bewick, Moreing partner with power of attorney. When Hooper left to become a London partner in Bewick Moreing, he was replaced as agent in charge of the Western Australian mines by a Welshman, Ernest Williams, whose main experience had been with coal mines in South Africa.

Herbert C. Hoover, at the time a 23-year-old geology graduate from the newly established Stanford University, had been recommended to Moreing by USA mining firm Louis Janin and Company for a post in their Coolgardie office, and arrived in Australia in May 1897. It is around Hoover and his role in the Sons of Gwalia in 1897-8 that the ‘establishment myth’ for the Sons of Gwalia can be said to have

²³ *Report of the Department of Mines, Western Australia* No. 25, 1897 (Perth: Government printer, 1898), p.60; *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 29 October 1897, among many other news reports.

²⁴ Richard G. Hartley, *A History of Technological Change in Kalgoorlie Gold Metallurgy 1895-1915*, Ph.D. thesis, Murdoch University (1998); Richard G. Hartley, ‘Bewick, Moreing in Western Australian Gold Mining 1897-1904: Management Policies & Goldfields Responses’, *Labour History* 65 (November 1993), pp.1-18.

developed. This is analysed in detail in Appendix 1 of this thesis, 'Hoover and the Sons of Gwalia'. Yet the publication of Hoover's memoirs in 1951 reinforced the perception that persists to the present day in Australia and the USA, that it was Hoover who had been responsible for purchase and development of this mine. The effect of this skewing of perspective towards Hoover in turn has had the effect of diminishing the importance of George W. Hall during the 1896-1898 period, and adds to the misleading perceptions that Hoover, deliberately or otherwise, fostered regarding his own part in the Sons of Gwalia.

Yet the facts for the years between 1896 and 1898 do not bear out these perceptions, or Hoover's memoirs. We know that a number of prominent Western Australian surveyors, including F. G. de Visme Gipps, J.W. Edols, W.R. Feldtmann and Western Australian Government surveyor, De Vries, had examined the mine during the period immediately following its purchase by Hall in 1896-7, well before Edward Hooper and Hoover became involved in any way. These were all respected geologists and surveyors, working either for the Department of Mines in producing their annual bulletins, or investigating mines for consideration by investing bodies on the London market. Edols's detailed report was the one that was actually used in the launch prospectus for the Sons of Gwalia. Feldtmann at the time was working for Berwick Moreing through the London and Hamburg Gold Recovery Company, advising them on methods of extracting gold from telluride ore.²⁵ It is far more likely that it would have been the well-connected and authoritative Feldtmann rather than Hoover, who did not reach Australia until May 1897, who would have made the initial recommendation through Hooper for Bewick, Moreing to investigate the mine further. Feldtmann was subsequently used extensively by the Sons of Gwalia Company for assay and evaluation during the period following the launch of the mine, including an evaluation of no fewer than nine processes for extraction which were being trialled to find the best method for extraction of gold from the more complex sulphided ore in the lower depths of this mine. There exists a hand-written record of

²⁵ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 28 May 1898. Feldtmann was a South African surveyor who was an expert on gold extraction using potassium cyanide. He published what was at the time the authoritative text on this process in 1894. He later became general manager for Bewick, Moreing in Western Australia; Battye Library MN294 Acc. 1734/3 file of reports on ore treatment processes. Between March and May 1898 he and Diehl were at Sons of Gwalia advising on the best methods of gold extraction from ore.

the Coolgardie office of Bewick, Moreing having made the substantial payment of £1200 during 1898 to Feldtmann for his services, more than the annual salaries of a number of the company's mine managers such as Mitchell and Goldstone.²⁶ This was during the very same period when Hoover was being paid £1500 per annum for his superintendent manager role in the mine and £500 for his work as inspecting engineer across the north-eastern goldfields. A flimsy in the early May 1898 period also makes it clear that it was Feldtmann who was responsible for the design of the cyanide plant at Sons of Gwalia, and John Jones, the Coolgardie-based Bewick, Moreing erection engineer, for its erection.²⁷ Alexander Matheson, the Perth-based partner in Bewick, Moreing, had also visited and inspected Sons of Gwalia; all this occurred in the period before Hoover took up his post at Coolgardie, let alone visited the Sons of Gwalia. This clearly demonstrates that the mine, extensively reported in newspapers across the region, would have already attracted considerably interest from a number of companies eager to finance a venture that Hall, by then well-respected in mining circles in London and Western Australia, had developed.

The mine itself was already down to 200 ft level by the time it was sold, and was producing well, under the able management of Castle. In addition to Castle, Hall had also made sure that he had a number of Welshmen that he trusted among his crew, among them Edward Williams, Bangor Jones and a Captain Roberts; most of these had worked with Castle at the Gwynfynydd mine in North Wales.²⁸ During the whole of its development period the mine was always regarded as 'being worked by Welshmen'.²⁹

Castle's role in the whole venture cannot be overemphasised. Since Hall had installed him as the first manager of the Sons of Gwalia in 1896, he had faithfully

²⁶ Battye Library, MN 0294/1, Acc. 4793A/8, Lalor deposit of Bewick, Moreing papers, handwritten list of payments made by Bewick, Moreing to staff in 1898, written on the blank part of the last page of a paper by George J. Bancroft, Denver Colorado, to the American Institute of Mining Engineers, February 1898, entitled *Kalgoorlie WA and its surroundings* (also classified as Acc. 444A); for Mitchell and Goldstone, see footnote 73.

²⁷ Battye Library, MN 0294/1, Acc.4793A, duplicate flimsy(n.d.) in the Bewick, Moreing papers. This John Jones is not the same person as Hall's manager at the North Star, but may well also have been Welsh.

²⁸ Battye Library, Manuscript PR 7631. Monograph by Hall's assayer, 20-year-old George Stewart Beresford, who had cycled up to the Sons of Gwalia from Coolgardie and asked for a job. Beresford gives a vivid account of his period as assayer with Castle and Hall at the mine.

²⁹ *West Australian* (Perth), 23 October 1923.

carried out the policy of the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency. This policy was typical of Pritchard Morgan's preferred mode of action, namely to ensure large extraction profits, before 'booming' the mine and selling it off as a going concern, and then profit-taking on shares. Since the upper oxidized gold-bearing lode was soft and easily crushable, providing rich returns, this was the focus of activity, and the more difficult sulphided lower levels were left for later treatment of the tailings after installation of the cyanide processing plant. Hoover, even before he took on the managership, was not happy with this policy.³⁰ Nevertheless when he took over as manager he too had to continue the same path, as he was under orders from his Bewick, Moreing-dominated directors to maximize profits. This was mainly because of the unwillingness or inability of Bewick, Moreing's London and Western Australian Exploration Company, in whom the majority of the shares in the mine were vested, to come up with the promised capital, or to call up the full cost of the shares from shareholders.

It will be argued that Hoover held a much longer-term view of the mine than the London and Westralian's short-term profit-taking policy, and it cannot be denied that his vision for the future provided the blueprint that successive managers used to develop the mine. However, his claims should in no way diminish Hall and Castle's pioneering roles in the north-eastern goldfields, as epitomised by their development of the Sons of Gwalia. It was undoubtedly Hall who opened up the field and the mine, and Hoover's six-month tenure as manager was far less influential than his memoirs would have us believe. Most contemporary sources quote Hall as the first manager, and state that Castle took over as manager when Hall went to London to launch the Sons of Gwalia in early 1898. However, it is evident that Hall's role involved much travel back and fore to the Coolgardie office, together with negotiation and investigation of other leases, and he also visited his home in Adelaide at this time — though he stressed at one of the celebration banquets in his honour that he had travelled back to oversee the erection of the Sons of Gwalia head frame and had spent

³⁰ Battye Library, Lalor deposit, MN 0294/1, Acc. 4793A/18, Cable 21 January 1898 (Coolgardie Office) to Bewick, Moreing, London, 'Eyes of Sons of Gwalia Mine are being picked out we wish mill shut down whenever we take charge stop'; cable Bewick, Moreing, London 20 January 1898, 192C, "The statutory meeting will be held 28th April "Sons of Gwalia Ltd." Instruct... to... G. W. Hall do as much as possible development work in time for. Also let us have your recommendation [regarding] machinery'.

three months there. This suggests that throughout the development period, Hall was the public face of Sons of Gwalia, the ‘front man’, and Castle, the practical mining expert, was the *de facto* day-to-day manager.

Cables between Edward Hooper, Bewick, Moreing’s agent in Western Australia in 1897, and the Moreing offices in London track the purchase of the Sons of Gwalia, and give a good indication of the respective parts played by Hooper and Hoover.³¹ The London office on 18 August 1897 cabled instructions:

E. Hooper or H.C. Hoover examine ‘Sons of Gwalia’ and ‘North Star’ Malcolm and adjacent properties. Telegraph as soon as possible report(s) The value of each property separate. Do you advise purchase in order to get control of see Hall at once with regard to act promptly.³²

Hooper replied the following day that he and Hoover were unable to proceed for 8-10 days and asked if F. Hessert (an American engineer who was his assistant in Bewick, Moreing, Coolgardie, and Hoover’s superior) could examine and report. However, Bewick, Moreing replied the same day ‘Mt Malcolm reports it is of the greatest importance must have E. Hooper or H.C. Hoover will wait 10 days’.

Thus it can be confidently asserted that it was Hall himself (from his base at the North Star mine, Mount Malcolm), who must have asked specifically for one of these two; this also suggests strongly that Hooper, Hoover or both had previously had sight of the mine and would be holding the same opinion on it as Hall. As has been stated earlier, Hoover like Hall, was a geologist; though, like Hall, he was later described as a ‘mining engineer’, in fact he had started a mechanical engineering course at Stanford, where there was no mining engineering course at the time, and had then transferred after a year to a geology course. He thus had no more formal mining qualifications than Hall, but would have a shared and detailed knowledge of geology. Though he had gained some practical experience in mines in the USA during vacations and subsequent to leaving college, his assertion that he had worked for three

³¹ Cable transcripts, Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa, Bewick, Moreing Collection, Hooveriana, files of Bewick, Moreing, container 1; Battye Library, Bewick, Moreing papers, MN 270 Acc. 1614A, correspondence, vol. 12; Lalor Deposit, MN 0294/1 Acc. 4793A/18.

³² The North Star, Mount Malcolm, was the only one of the 120 leases upon which Pritchard Morgan had taken an option that Hall took up. Hooper in his letters to Hoover was quite contemptuous about this mine.

years in mines was a considerable exaggeration as the total period worked had been less than six months, significantly less than Hall's.³³

On 1 September Bewick, Moreing, London said, 'Refer to your cable of 28th [actually 29th] full instructions given Mr Hall August 25th. Fresh instructions have been given today'. Thus it must be concluded that Hall was integrally involved in the negotiations between Hooper in Australia, Bewick, Moreing in London, and Morgan on behalf of the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Company.

Hoover's initial report was given in a detailed cable of 11 September 1897.³⁴ However, it was apparent that another company was still in discussion with Hall, Morgan and the London and Westralian, since the Bewick, Moreing's Western Australian office on 18 November cabled to London 'Barnett representing the Mines Selection Syndicate examining Sons of Gwalia if not in order telegraph'. This confirms Nash's suggestion that Hall and Pritchard Morgan had been still in active negotiation with other interested parties—in fact, Morgan had considered going to Whitaker Wright for finance but had thought better of it because of critical comment in the press on Whitaker Wright's British Columbia ventures. In any case, the cable spurred Bewick, Moreing to action the same day, telegraphing 'Mr Barnett inspection is not in order owner send instructions by wire put a stop to We wish your report by wire as quickly as possible direct to Messrs. Pritchard Morgan and Co, London'.³⁵ The word 'owner' clearly indicates that Bewick, Moreing had by that date come to agreement with Pritchard Morgan on the leases, and this was later confirmed by the fact that the date for acquisition of the mine by the London and Western Australian Exploration Company was given as 17 November.

³³ George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover, the Engineer*, pp.42-50.

³⁴ Battye Library MN 270 Acc. 1614A and MN 0294/1, Acc. 4793/18, Bewick, Moreing cable of 11 September, 1897. The cable stated that 'the Mine is impregnation' (i.e. the gold was through the rock, not only in a lode), with several veins from 2 ft to 20 ft, and said (as Hall, and so many newspapers, had already said before him) that the clay slate formation was very similar to 'Hannans' – the fabulously rich strike which set off the Kalgoorlie rush. Hoover said that the 'very poor method' of treating 2350 tons had produced 34 dwts. (approaching 2 oz.) per ton and estimated that there was a further 16 dwts. in the tailings, to be recovered subsequently by cyanidisation – a very rich return. He described significant further workings down to 120 ft level and detailed the ore 'blocked out' from different locations.

³⁵ A full version of the cable would read as follows: 'Mr Barnett[']s inspection is not in order. [We are now the] owner[.] Send instructions by wire [to] put a stop to [his inspection]. We wish your report [to be sent] by wire as quickly as possible direct to Morganatic [Messrs. Pritchard Morgan and Co., London].

Hooper, accompanied by Hoover, was still at Menzies, as a cable to London on 22 November confirms, adding, ‘when do you wish us and to whom shall we telegraph report “Sons of Gwalia” ’. This was supplemented when Hoover returned to Coolgardie and produced a thirteen-page report amplifying on his findings. Finally on 26 November, well after the date of the purchase, the full report was produced, based on Hoover’s account of 11 September, but with more detail and specificity.³⁶

The typed and signed copy shows that it was indeed Hoover who was responsible for this augmented report, but the fact that Hooper, as well as Hoover, was at Menzies (only 64 miles from Sons of Gwalia) argues strongly that both had been visiting the mine, and that Hoover was obeying instructions of London and Hooper, rather than working on his own initiative. Hooper in two letters to C.W. Harris in 1947 and 1948 confirmed this.³⁷ So, it can be strongly argued that the key factors in the purchase were Hall and Hooper’s discussions on the mine, for which Hoover’s report provided the evidence. Memory of events over such a long period of time is often skewed and inaccurate; Ernest Williams, Hooper’s successor as agent in Western Australia, also later claimed that the mine was bought on his recommendation, and in a letter to Hoover on his way to London, Hooper also speculated that Alexander Matheson ‘would like it thought that he planned the whole business and was alone responsible for the flotation’.³⁸ L.P. Menzies, an ‘outback purveyor of tall tales’, later claimed that Hoover was his assistant in surveying the mine.³⁹

³⁶ George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover, the Engineer*, p.65; copy of Hoover’s cabled report also reproduced in the Sons of Gwalia prospectus 11 January 1898. This stated among other detail that in a distance of 650 feet of the number 9 shaft on the 106 ft level there were 6 chutes of high-grade ore. It concluded by saying ‘Profit in sight above the water level [this was on the 140 ft level] £75,000. Number 9 shaft known ore bodies will yield a monthly profit of £22,000 am sure it is a mine with a great future before it’.

³⁷ Battye Library, MN 0294, Acc. 1734A/8, G.M.S.Leader Donation, letters, Edward Hooper to C. M. Harris, November 17 1947 and April 8 1948. The first letter stated that it was he himself who had inspected the Sons of Gwalia on 26 September 1897 and recommended purchase. However, the subsequent letter confirmed ‘...owing to further inspection of my records that you were practically correct in attributing to H. C. Hoover the responsibility for the original purchase of the Sons of Gwalia. It would seem that after protracted discussions with Hall and an examination of the data provided by him, I instructed Hoover to sample the mine and make a report to me thereon. On receipt of this report I cabled London recommending purchase of the property’.

³⁸ Battye Library, MN 0294/1, Acc. 4793A/1, Bewick, Moreing papers, letter, Edward Hooper to Herbert Hoover, 22 February 1898, en voyage to London.

³⁹ L.R.Menzies, *A Gold Seeker’s Odyssey* (Perth: Hesperian Press 2004 reprint of 1937 edition)

We can conclude, therefore, that far from Sons of Gwalia being the primitive workings of a few Welshmen that Hoover's memoirs suggests he chanced upon, the mine was already well-developed and well known in Western Australian mining circles. Furthermore, it was Pritchard Morgan's company, at Hall's instigation, that had actively sought a financial partner to support the necessary developments. This is even confirmed by the prospectus issued to float the Sons of Gwalia Company Ltd. on 10 January 1898 which says 'The properties were discovered by Welsh(*sic*) Prospectors in the summer of 1896, since which date a large amount of development has been carried out'. Newspaper stories of the period, and throughout the following decades, were consistent in attributing the credit for purchase to George Hall, and the negotiation with Bewick, Moreing as being the result of an approach to that company by Pritchard Morgan.⁴⁰

There is further extensive newspaper evidence that in the contemporary public mind it was Hall and Castle who were undoubtedly the most important people in the purchase and development of the Sons of Gwalia, and indeed in the opening up of the whole new Mount Margaret Goldfield. Throughout the April-November 1898 period an analysis of the pages of the *Malcolm Chronicle and Leonora Advertiser* emphasises this. During that period Castle was the principal guest at two fully reported celebration dinners, where the speeches were unequivocal in praising him and Hall, the first given by the employees of the Sons of Gwalia and North Star mines in December 1897 and the second by Leonora's public figures just before the planned date of Castle's departure for Wales in May 1898.⁴¹ During the same period the *Malcolm Chronicle* reported no fewer than four such banquets where George Hall was feted. At the first, on 4 February 1898 to speed Hall on his way to London for the launch of the Sons of Gwalia Company, he was referred to as 'One of the men who has opened up the district and has been the means of bringing money into this country'. Another speaker commented, 'The Chairman remarked that when he (Mr Hall) came here it [Leonora] was a very small place. The fact was... that there was no

⁴⁰ *West Australian* (Perth) 23 October 1923, for example. Even at this date, Hall was still described as 'the first manager' of the mine, though that should have been attributed to Castle, with Hall superintending mainly from the North Star mine, Mt. Malcolm or the London and Westralian's Coolgardie office.

⁴¹ *Malcolm Chronicle and Leonora Advertiser*, 21 December 1897.

place at all (laughter)'.⁴² A further speaker at that dinner, surveyor Mr Sherlaw, said that his own first visit had been twelve months previously when he had sampled the mine and reported favourably.⁴³ This is further evidence of Hall's proactive role in seeking investment long before Hoover's appearance on the scene. On February 10 1898, on his way through Albany bound for London, Hall cabled that he had met the Minister for Railways and Transport, Mr F.H. Piesse,⁴⁴ who would visit Mount Malcolm with a view to continuing the railway through to that district. In a later press interview he referred also to having lobbied the Western Australian Premier, Sir John Forrest before leaving, and on his return he continued to pressure both Piesse and Sir John, though the railway was not extended from Menzies to Malcolm until 1902 and to Leonora by 1903. In September 1899 once more, the *Malcolm Chronicle* stated:

...he[Hall] can fairly claim to be the pioneer of the district north of Menzies. From the time he took up the Sons of Gwalia he has poured money lavishly into the work of developing this portion of the country, and the locality owes its present prominence largely to his efforts and his enterprise.⁴⁵

When he again passed through Perth in June 1900 for Britain to drum up further capital, the *Inquirer* described him as 'The father of the Mount Margaret Goldfield' and suggested 'Mr Hall as the foremost man in the district as the most probable successful candidate for the [new Mount Margaret seat in the] Legislative Assembly'.⁴⁶

Hall was known as the man who first brought machinery to the Leonora and Malcolm districts and was well regarded as not only on making his own fortune but also on developing the social and community aspects of the goldfields. His unfailingly positive public utterances always showed his total commitment to the north-eastern goldfields. In May 1898, there were two columns in the local paper quoting Hall's interview in London with the *British Australasian*, detailing discovery and

⁴² *Ibid.*, 5 February 1898.

⁴³ James Lennox Sherlaw, mining engineer of Coolgardie, Coolgardie Directory 1898, p.4, http://www.outbackfamilyhistory.com.au/records/record.php?record_id=122&PHPSESSID=1eb6c40c1eafeb1d61232334b6734e9f, accessed 27 January 2014.

⁴⁴ *Malcolm Chronicle and Leonora Advertiser*, 12 February 1898.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 9 September 1899.

⁴⁶ *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 29 June 1900.

development of the Sons of Gwalia mine.⁴⁷ There was yet another celebratory banquet in his honour in Leonora on his return from London, where he announced the promise of capital investment for the mine. In an interview in October 1898 on his return from Britain he was once more described as ‘The pioneer of the Mount Malcolm and Leonora Districts’.⁴⁸ In his report to the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Company early in 1897 he had said:

Workmen employed are very anxious to put their savings in her [*i.e* the mine] when she is floated, and I have promised them that if she is floated, the staff will have shares. I trust the Board will endorse this promise.⁴⁹

It is no surprise that the town of Leonora boasts a Hall Street and a Castles Street.⁵⁰ Neither is it a coincidence that a later *Western Argus* records that the first child born in Leonora was George Castles Leonora Pollock.⁵¹ There is, of course, also a Hoover street in the town.

Hall’s reputation as an able mining man with a nose for a good mine (and capability to identify those which would not pay) was solid over this period. At the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency general meeting of 13 December 1899 reference was made to ‘that magnificent property, the Sons of Gwalia that has far exceeded the expectations set out by their able manager Mr Hall’, and forecast that Hall’s judgment that the Euro mine would become a ‘second Sons of Gwalia’ would be proved right. (He was not correct, but it did survive under his guidance until 1903, and produced 18,000 ounces of gold).

Yet despite Hall’s acknowledged honesty, the business in which he moved was a murky one. The Sons of Gwalia launch prospectus referred to the agreement of 17 November 1897 for the sale of the lease to Bewick, Moreing’s London and

⁴⁷ *British Australasian* (London), March 24 1898, quoted in the *Malcolm Chronicle and Leonora Advertiser*, 21 May 1898.

⁴⁸ *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 28 October 1898.

⁴⁹ Battye Library, MN 294, Acc. 1734A/6, Sons of Gwalia Prospectus, 11 January 1898, incorporating De Visme Gipps report (28 October 1896) and Edols’ report 5 December 1896), Hoover’s cabled report and this extract from Hall’s reports (1896-97) to the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency, 20 January 1897.

⁵⁰ Alexander Wilson Castle was known often, in the Australian fashion, as ‘Castles’ - similarly mineowner and member of the legislature Alfred Morgan became Morgans.

⁵¹ Henry Harris, *Reminiscences of by-gone Menzies by the Old Fossicker*, and *On the Northern Fields* (Carlisle, WA: Hesperian Press, 1907-8; 1937, reprinted together in one volume, 2009), p.44.

Western Australian Exploration Company. There was a further agreement of 5 January 1898 for the resale by that company to the newly established Sons of Gwalia Ltd. Company. This was typical of the type of deal in such flotations, where the purchasers of mines or leases would float a company, and sell the property to that company for an inflated share value, resulting in large paper profits, but very little capital injection for the mine's use; in this manner Bewick, Moreing certainly made significant gains, and no doubt recouped their initial purchase price.

The prospectus for Sons of Gwalia Limited published in January 1898 with a share issue of £300,000, indicated that the vendors, the London and Western Australian Exploration Company, who purchased from Pritchard Morgan, Paddon and Hall's companies were selling the Sons of Gwalia block of seven 24-acre leases at a profit, and £250,000 in paid up shares, allowing a working capital of £50,000 for the mine.⁵² However, as all of shares had been subscribed, and the vendors were taking the whole of the purchase consideration in shares, the prospectus was being issued for public information only—so Sons of Gwalia remained very firmly in the control of the Bewick, Moreing companies. This deliberate ploy by the Sons of Gwalia Company Ltd. ramped up the price of shares, by making them difficult to obtain except at a premium, and, as said previously, initially such shares as were available traded at more than twice their face price. Hooper's letters to Hoover show that though Sons of Gwalia directors were anxious to make a quick profit by sale of shares, they were hampered because of lack of activity in the market. However, by December 1899 the London and Western Australian Exploration Company only held 43,459 shares, so there had been considerable profit taking.⁵³ The London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency, the British Westralian Mines and Share Corporation and the Union Financial Syndicate Ltd. between them as minority shareholders had received a third, or an issued £100,000, of shares.⁵⁴ The cash payment that had been shared between these companies was a further £50,000 and the agreement also stipulated that subscribed capital of £50,000 would be available from

⁵² Advertisement, 'Sons of Gwalia', *Saturday Review*, vol. 85, issue 2203 (15 Jan 1898) and both subsequent weeks' issues.

⁵³ *British Australasian*, 7 December 1899, cited in George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: the Engineer*, endnote 133, p.610.

⁵⁴ *Sons of Gwalia Complimentary Dinner to George W. Hall*, souvenir booklet, George Hall's speech, pp.12,26; Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/5, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988.

the London and Western Australian Exploration Company for equipment. As a result, George Hall at the complimentary dinner was able to announce that shareholders in the London and Westralian and the British Westralian had received very substantial dividends over the previous days and that the less important Union Financial had received ‘very respectable dividends’ of 60%; from this we can deduce that the other two companies’ dividends were considerably higher. Turnbull quotes an unnamed newspaper source at this period that ‘In London, Mr G. W. Hall was regarded as one of the most popular mining men in the City’.⁵⁵

Hall stated at the Hotel Cécil dinner of 28 March 1898 that ‘Bewick, Moreing take it over tomorrow’ as agents for the Sons of Gwalia, and though Nash suggested that they were general managers and consulting engineers from 17 February, a Bewick, Moreing telegram of 3 March cancelled their previous directive and confirmed that Castle should still follow instructions of the London and Westralian and that Bewick, Moreing’s role was as consulting engineers only.⁵⁶ Castle continued to run the mine as acting manager until 1 May; clearly Hall and Pritchard Morgan still had a significant say in the overall direction of the mine and this is reinforced by the 7 May 1898 meeting of the Sons of Gwalia Company Limited, where the chairman of that new company, Cyril Wanklyn, deferred to George Hall who was present at the meeting and who, he said, had more knowledge than himself of the mine, having been there more recently.⁵⁷ Wanklyn also noted that ore reserves had increased from 15,000 tons in November to 30,000 tons in April; this all, of course, occurred under the managership of Castle and Hall.

At the London and Westralian fourth general meeting in November 1898, the chair referred to Hall’s appointment as their managing director for Western Australia and said ‘We now have the advantage of Mr Hall’s personal superintendence of them [the 477 acres of the Gwalia properties apart from Sons of Gwalia] as he ... now devotes his whole attention to our properties’. Hall also subsequently inspected the Sons of Gwalia mine on behalf of the same company prior to that company’s ordinary general meeting in November 1901, and reported an increased output and increased

⁵⁵ C. W. F. Turnbull, *Looking Back, Gwalia-Leonora 1895-1963*, p.6.

⁵⁶ George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: the Engineer*, p.6.

⁵⁷ *Capitalist*, 7 May 1898, First General Meeting of Sons of Gwalia Company, Ltd.

percentage of gold per ton as a result of the (Hoover-initiated) developments. How far this was reality, how far it was the result of Hoover's ploy to boost figures by using the smaller American 'short ton' to measure percentage, and how far it was Hall 'booming' to promote the share value, is uncertain, since by this time, the mine was only maintaining production by crushing previously blocked-out ore that Castle had extracted. However Hall's reputation by that time meant that if he said it was good, shareholders accepted it was so. Hall's judgement also reflects other statements in Sons of Gwalia Company meetings where his views were lauded; though Edward Hooper in a personal letter to Hoover had said that he did not trust Hall, this was not the view of the majority of directors in that Bewick, Moreing-controlled company.⁵⁸

By the time Hall had returned from England in October 1898, Castle had already made significant progress on the new Star of Gwalia lease adjacent to the Sons of Gwalia, that Hall had previously pegged out and retained for the London and Westralian. With Castle on six months' leave, partly to regain his health, and also to bring over his family, Hall from his North Star base took a more direct role in management and operation of the properties which by now included four blocks totalling 380 acres south on the line of the Sons of Gwalia lode; Bewick, Moreing had pegged out additional leases around the north and east sides of Sons of Gwalia and also taken an option on Gwalia No 1 South, the only area directly south of Sons of Gwalia that Hall had not been able to peg, as T.A. Duffil had got there first. Castle returned from Britain by April 1899 to manage the Star of Gwalia and by August this had been consolidated under his direction with Hall's other three Gwalia leases and the North Star as a new Gwalia Consolidated Company (or Gwalia Consols as it was frequently known). By the date of Sir John Forrest's visit in 1901, the Mount Margaret Goldfields, of which Sons of Gwalia and Mount Margaret were by far the main contributors, had overtaken Coolgardie to become second only to Kalgoorlie as

⁵⁸ Battye Library MN 0294, Acc. 4793A/1, Letter, Hooper to Hoover, 19 May 1898, Bewick, Moreing papers. Referring to London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency, Hooper wrote, 'Hall told me a little time ago that they proposed to pay another dividend, also that he was trying to buy all the shares he could get hold of. From what I know of that gentleman however, I am inclined to distrust anything he says, and it is very likely that he is selling out his own interest instead of buying more shares'. Hall as always proved perfectly genuine. Hooper missed out substantially by selling his and Hoover's London and Westralian shares just before that company declared a dividend. (Battye Library, Letter, MN 0294 Acc. 4793A/1, Hooper to Hoover, 3 June 1898).

gold producers.⁵⁹ One can say without doubt that 1897 to 1901 was the period when Hall's public image was at its zenith.

A further question that needs examination is the contribution that Hoover, in contrast to Hall, made to the Sons of Gwalia. It is important to realize that he was only at Gwalia for a brief six months contract; Hall on the other hand even during his periods of absence in London remained a powerful and influential presence over the whole Northern Goldfield area. It has already been established that over the period, many of the references to Hoover in the press were occasional and perfunctory. The *West Australian*, in October 1898 stated, 'The Sons of Gwalia, which is now under the management of Mr Hoover, recently connected with some large mines in America, was acquired by Mr G.W. Hall in 1896 on behalf of the London and Westralian'.⁶⁰ *The Inquirer and Commercial News* confirmed in an interview with Charles Moreing the chairman of the both Bewick, Moreing and the London and Western Australian Exploration Company that, 'American experts in the company's employment out there have endorsed the statements that the formation is identical with that at Hannan's, and equally rich and extensive'.⁶¹ The same article quoted in full Hoover/Hooper's report by cable dated 26 November, so it is clear to which 'American expert' the report referred. The most extensive Hoover- originated press report for the November-May period comes from a Perth newspaper, and it is clear from it that Hoover himself was the source that claimed he had recommended the purchase of the Sons of Gwalia.⁶²

Hoover in his memoirs stated that when he was appointed manager:

I at once undertook vigorous development of the mine and the installation of a large metallurgical plant.⁶³

⁵⁹ *West Australian*, 5 January 1901, said that the gold yield in 1900 of 141,523 oz. was almost 60,000 oz. up on 1899.

⁶⁰ *West Australian* (Perth), 4 October 1898, article 'The Leonora Country'. This gives considerable detail on individual mines in the goldfield and says, '...the Sons of Gwalia group rank foremost in the van... a gold mine in the truest sense of the word'.

⁶¹ *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 14 January 1898, quoting *The Australasian Mail*, 2 December 1897.

⁶² *Perth Morning Herald*, n.d. cutting, Battye Library G.M. Leader Donation, MN 0294, Acc.1734A.

⁶³ H. C. Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover, 1874-1920, Years of Adventure* (Macmillan, New York 1951), p.33.

One cannot argue but that his initial changes were substantial—by 9 May 1898, he had instituted single-hand working, had increased hours from 44 to 48, and negotiated, as he had done previously in East Murchison, to bring in Italian labour which he regarded as cheaper and more efficient. Hoover's first actions as manager, increasing working hours, reducing staff underground and recruiting Italian labour, led to Bewick, Moreing becoming nervous about conflict with the Labour Union and the danger of strikes.⁶⁴

In terms of gold production, however, little changed. Though more work was carried out at a lower cost, there were no major increases in profitability, as much more was expended on development than on gold production. In fact without the good work Castle had carried out during the inter-regnum of the takeover, Hoover would not have had a sufficient stock of ore to mill even with the antiquated battery to which he referred so dismissively. Though Hoover made several visits to the mine between the sale in November and his takeover in May, it was definitely Hall, through the agency of the 'reliable Mr Castle', who had continued with developing the mine, blocking out significant additional quantities of ore ready for crushing by the proposed new 50-stamp battery. This was in accordance with the instructions of Bewick, Moreing in February 1898 to 'push development work with all rapidity... it is the desire of the Directors to keep up the grade of crushing until after this meeting' (at least, therefore, until the grand 'launch' on 28 March). There was considerable correspondence between Bewick, Moreing in Coolgardie and Castle on these matters from February to May.⁶⁵

It can be acknowledged that Hoover played the prime role in the planning of the new developments, designing a new treatment plant, initiating the brick-built

⁶⁴ Battye Library, Bewick, Moreing letter, May 6 1898, Sons of Gwalia papers, MN 270, Acc. 1614A, cited in Jeremy Mouat and Ian Phimister, 'The Engineering of Herbert Hoover', *Pacific Historical Review*, University of California vol.77, no.4 (2008), footnote 15, p.558.

⁶⁵ Battye Library MN 270, Acc.1614A, Bewick, Moreing cables and letters to Alexander Castle, February to April 1898. Most significant was a cable of 3 March 'We [i.e. Bewick, Moreing controlled companies] have not taken over yet you must obey Morganatic [i.e. London&Westralian] as before in Sons of Gwalia matters I hereby cancel my letter of the 23rd re agreement we act consulting engineer only. Mr Durant and self agree in above also you look after No.1 South [i.e. Gwalia No. 1 South, the option for which had been obtained by Bewick, Moreing] am writing fully'.

assay and manager's offices, and planning to locate the main inclined shaft further south and erect another headframe.⁶⁶ Plans were also laid for power from steam boilers fired by local mulga brushwood, electricity for lighting and for new accommodation blocks. However, it was still Castle who had to implement the first stages of this plan, until 1 May 1898, with Hall for much of that time away in London as the major figure in the Sons of Gwalia launch on 28 March. Even after 1 May, Castle's influence continued. There are references in the mine letterbook to equipment that he had ordered, and bills that he submitted for materials and equipment, which Hoover had to refer for payment approval to Coolgardie.

It is apparent that Hoover's decision-making from the start was constrained by the tight restrictions placed upon him by Ernest Williams, Bewick, Moreing's agent, and by detailed scrutiny of directors in London through the letters and cables of company secretary T. W. Wellsted. Far from having full control, as Hoover had insisted upon in November 1897, every act of his tenure was examined, queried and on several occasions over-ridden.⁶⁷ He at no point had power of attorney over the Sons of Gwalia. Every major decision needed the approval of the two who did have such powers, Alexander Matheson, the Perth-based partner in Bewick, Moreing, and Ernest Williams. All reports had to be forwarded through Coolgardie to London, and Williams stressed that Hoover was the superintending manager, answerable to himself, the general manager.⁶⁸

Letters and cables indicate that the whole process of takeover between the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency, Bewick, Moreing's London and Western Australian Exploration Company and the new Sons of Gwalia Company Ltd. was tense.⁶⁹ Castle continued to stope out ore, where Hoover wanted to close the mine

⁶⁶ C.W.F. Turnbull, *Looking Back, Gwalia-Leonora 1895-1963*, p.3.

⁶⁷ for example, Battye Library, MN 0294/1, Acc. 4793A/1, Sons of Gwalia papers, May 1898, Bewick, Moreing, Coolgardie Office, 'Mr Williams is of the opinion it will be impossible to get this Winding Engine delivered to Sons of Gwalia earlier than December next'.

⁶⁸ Battye Library MN 0294/1, Acc. 4793A/1, Bewick, Moreing (Williams) to Hoover, 27 April 1898.

⁶⁹ Battye Library, MN 0294/1 Acc. 4793A/1, particularly letter, 14 October 1898, T. W. Wellsted, Company Secretary, Bewick, Moreing to Coolgardie Office. Though one might have expected harmony between London and Western Australian Exploration Company and the Sons of Gwalia Company as they representing largely the same interests, there were continual disputes between them. Both companies were also suspicious of the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency's delay in paying over the proceeds of extraction between November 1897 and the end of

down for development of the new main shaft. However, Edward Hooper pointed out in a letter to Hoover that to close down would take a very large slice out of working capital and would depress the market.⁷⁰ Continued tensions between the three companies were a constant feature of the period between November 1897 and June 1898. Castle ensured that every item not included in the bill of sale was charged to the Sons of Gwalia Company Ltd. account, and Hoover also disputed many of the Sons of Gwalia bills as being the responsibility of the London and Western Australian Exploration Company.⁷¹ Castle, who was in sole charge from February onwards during Hall's absence to attend the March flotation of the Sons of Gwalia company, made sure of every penny; the final accounting of the value of gold due to Bewick, Moreing was not completed until June, when Castle presented a figure of over £9000 profit from November to the beginning of May, and disputes on billing of purchased items continued until August 1898.

The ill-feeling between agent Ernest Williams and the cadre of American engineers at this period was also extreme, as is chronicled not only in Walter Liggett's virulently hostile but largely accurate biography of Hoover, but also in detail in Nash's own account. Hoover certainly did fall out with his superior Williams in much the way Walter Liggett describes, and there certainly was a conspiracy against Williams in which Hoover played a leading role.⁷² The acerbic nature of Hoover's correspondence to the Coolgardie office in the Sons of Gwalia letterbook, and in particular, a series of letters to him from colleagues and fellow American engineers such as Mitchell and Goldstone, who was manager at Bewick, Moreing's Consolidated Murchison, confirm as much.⁷³ The war that was taking place over these

April 1898, and this letter records disputes on a 'Cornish Boiler' where both London and Westralian and London and Western Australian Exploration Company claimed an order appeared to have been duplicated, for which no-one would admit responsibility.

⁷⁰ Battye Library, MN 0294/1 Acc. 4793A/1, letter, Hooper, to Hoover, 19 May 1898.

⁷¹ Battye Library, MN 1110, Acc. 1460A, Sons of Gwalia Letterbook, numerous letters to the Coolgardie office of B&M. Though in many ways the London and Western Australian Exploration Company, Charles Moreing's executive arm for Bewick, Moreing, was one and the same as the Sons of Gwalia Company, yet accounts were kept separately and rigorous attention to attribution of costs was the order of the day.

⁷² Walter W. Liggett, *The Rise of Herbert Hoover* (New York: HK Fly Company, 1931, reprint Lightning Source UK, 2010), pp.60-64.

⁷³ Battye Library, MN 0294/1, Acc. 4793A/1, extensive correspondence from Hoover's American colleague, Lewis Goldstone, and between Goldstone and Edward Hooper from February to November 1898, and with other engineer colleagues such as D.P. Mitchell at East Murchison mine show that warfare was unabated, and that Hoover was very much at the centre of it. Williams

months as Ernest Williams attempted to rid himself of what he saw as ‘damned Yankees’ resulted in the end in even Edward Hooper’s patience being tried as he reproved Hoover more than once for his ‘most decided prejudice against Mr W’.⁷⁴

Hoover hated the environment in Australia and said as much in a letter to his brother Theodore.⁷⁵ In one of his numerous letters to Hooper, Hoover asked when Hooper would carry out his promise to find him another placement.⁷⁶ Hooper, who had left Australia since February to become a partner in Bewick, Moreing in London, had a great regard for the work his young protégé had carried out for him in Australia. As indicated previously, Hoover was also financially involved with him through the shares Hooper had bought on their joint behalf. Though he had originally been asked by Hoover to find a placement for him in the USA, Hooper ensured that Moreing would send him to China, partly because matters between Hoover and Williams had deteriorated to such a degree. Ernest Williams’ formal letter giving notice to Hoover that his six months’ contract at Sons of Gwalia and the related district inspecting role would be terminated would no doubt have afforded the agent considerable satisfaction. Neither did Hoover have his own way, as he had requested to Hooper, on his favoured successor; Williams made sure it was Harry James, a fellow Welshman based at the Coolgardie office that was appointed, rather than Hoover’s friend Goldstone.⁷⁷

was described as ‘sly and evasive’, G.B. Wilson says he was resolved to leave the company, and Goldstone made a series of frantic appeals to Hoover and Hooper for another position. One of Mitchell’s letters is no fewer than 17 pages long and couched in the most antagonistic and derogatory terms towards Williams.

⁷⁴ Battye Library, MN 0294/1, Acc. 4793A/1, letters, Hooper to Herbert Hoover, 26 July 1898; 23 September 1898, ‘I am very sorry to note the aggrieved attitude you are adopting against Mr Williams. You can’t imagine how depressing it is to note all these petty grievances...’

⁷⁵ Letter, Herbert Hoover to Theodore Hoover, Coolgardie 1898 box file 1, Australia 1897-98, Hoover Papers, Hoover Presidential Library, cited in Jeremy Mouat and Ian Phimister, ‘The Engineering of Herbert Hoover’, footnote 20, p.560, ‘I am damned glad to get out of here I can tell you. You would need to know the country to appreciate it. Nothing could be worse; my whole stay has been a nightmare in a dozen regards’.

⁷⁶ Battye Library, MN 0294/1 Acc. 4793A/1, letter, Hooper to Hoover, 7 August 1898. ‘Two [letters] received in one day’ said Hooper, also complaining, not for the first time, that Hoover had put insufficient postage stamps on them.

⁷⁷ *Y Drych*, 22 June 1899; Battye Library, MN0294/1 Acc.4793A/1A, letter, Hooper to Goldstone, 20 January 1899, makes it clear Hooper had canvassed for Goldstone and was still negotiating to get rid of Ernest Williams’ appointee, Harry James; Battye Library MN270 Acc.1614A/1, Williams’ Coolgardie cable 11 November 1898 confirmed James appointment had not yet been authorized by London, and Hoover as a result had to continue in post until 21 November.

The Sons of Gwalia Company reports over the following two years show steady decline as barren ground was hit, and a refinancing of the company was necessary in order to purchase the adjacent Gwalia Consolidated leases that Hall had pegged out for the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency. These were acquired in 1902 by the Sons of Gwalia Company for a further £18,000 worth of shares. Hoover, by then a partner in Bewick, Moreing, had returned to Australia for a three-month supervisory visit early in 1902. Yet at a meeting of Bewick, Moreing's London and Western Australian Exploration Company at the same period, the chairman made a virtue of necessity in saying that there has been much expenditure for no return on Sons of Gwalia but that the investment in stocks of wood and water together with machinery installation would in time pay off in lower production costs.⁷⁸ Similarly at a disputation meeting of shareholders of Sons of Gwalia Company Ltd. in June of the same year, the chairman, Cyril Wanklyn, has to admit that crushing in that month showed results less than half of two years previously, read out extracts from several over-optimistic managers' letters and stated that as the company was in a state of "temporary financial paralysis", writing down the value of the accounts had been necessary.⁷⁹

In fact, the first six managers, including Castle and Hoover, averaged only 10 months in post, from 1897-1902. In that time 298.945 tons of ore were treated for a yield of £652,408 at 43/7 per ton – dividends were only £61,800 in total over the period, and the directors had to borrow to pay these, with no dividend at all being paid in 1902. In that year also, George Hall did not mince matters in his condemnation of the way in which 'his' mine was run, a mine in which he still held considerable equity both directly and through the London and Westralian, and which he had regularly inspected up to that period. He was scathing about the management regime, which followed the top-heavy pattern Hoover had introduced.⁸⁰ It was not until Hoover recruited W.J. Loring to manage the mine in 1902, that affairs changed. Loring fired the multiplicity of bosses whom he describes as "wandering about", and reducing the

⁷⁸ *West Australian* (Perth), 15 January 1902.

⁷⁹ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 22 July 1902.

⁸⁰ Hoover had been warned by Sons of Gwalia company secretary Cyril Wanklyn about the need to economise when he informed him early in his stewardship that there were eight management staff at the mine.

payroll by half. In an interview at the time with the *British Australasian*, Hall's words were:

The Sons of Gwalia was noted as being the most over-bossed mine in the whole field, and if you walked through the place you might have imagined you were in a community of city clerks, so immaculate were the heads of the interminable departments got up. When the new manager Mr Loring had sized things up, he reckoned that he was going to be the only man to wear a stiff collar and the others would have to turn to, put on soft shirts, and work.⁸¹

Hall listed the economies Loring brought in, including reducing the mill staff by 19 hands, storekeepers from six to two and accountants from ten to four. In all, manpower was reduced by between 300 and 400 and as a result he could say, 'the Sons of Gwalia is now earning a profit of from £8000 to £10,000 a month'. Inevitably, as he and Morgan's company still retained most of their 1/3 interest in the mine, and as Hall in his relationships with the press were unfailingly optimistic, the picture presented of the mine is a positive one. Even so, it is apparent that Loring's reforms were far more to Hall's taste than Hoover's style of management had been, and rightly so; during Loring's short 18 months' tenure, the mine treated 50,112 tons for a yield of £360,115 or 72 shillings a ton with dividends of £79,500.⁸²

Even more damaging, Hoover's (or more probably Feldtmann's) proposed cyanidisation plant, essential to extract further gold from the tailings was not fully operational until 1901. The 10-stamp battery was not replaced by a 30-stamp battery until 1902, and even then it was not the new one Hoover had requested but a recycled London and Western Australian Exploration Company battery from Fremantle.⁸³ The full 50-stamp battery, whose installation was referred to optimistically in most reports, from Hall's Hotel Cécil speech in March 1898 onward, through a succession of increasingly critical Sons of Gwalia Company meetings, did not come into full production until 1903.

⁸¹ *British Australasian*, 6 November 1902, quoted also in the *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 30 December 1902.

⁸² *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 1 April 1913.

⁸³ Battye Library, MN 0249/1, Acc. 4793A/1, letter, Hooper to Hoover, 29 July 1898, 'I have practically agreed that the 30 stamp mill with engine and boiler power for 40 stamps currently lying at Fremantle shall be erected at the mine... I can imagine you and Williams kicking at this'.

The truth was, as Pritchard Morgan pointed out in a stormy Sons of Gwalia Company meeting as early as 25 May 1899, the capital promised by Bewick, Moreing to develop the mine had not been forthcoming.⁸⁴ Under the terms of the purchase agreement, the London and Western Australian Exploration Company committed to provide £50,000 of working capital for the mine, but in fact, shareholders, (mainly Bewick, Moreing, but also including Pritchard Morgan's own companies) were never called on to provide their full paid up value, with only 6/-6d in the pound being called up in the first 18 months. Instead, profit from the mine was used to subsidise setting-up costs rather than being distributed as shares. No machinery had arrived since the mine was bought on 17 November 1897, with London and Westralian having expended only £672 since the date of sale to carry on mining until 30 April 1897. Subsequently to the end of 1898, £5000 more had been spent on salaries and expenses; costs of administration of the property actually exceeded that spent on mining and development. Paddon, representing the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency at the Sons of Gwalia Company 1899 meeting, stated that 'they had got one of the best mines and one of the worst set of directors in the world'.⁸⁵ The result was that any Sons of Gwalia profits, which the shareholders might have expected to come to them (and of course, such profit-taking was Pritchard Morgan's major interest), had been instead channelled into maintaining Bewick, Moreing's other activities and taking the place of the promised capital investment in this mine. Letters in the Bewick, Moreing file in the Battye Library collection and the Sons of Gwalia letterbook throughout 1898 demonstrate clearly that Bewick, Moreing also was undergoing a cash flow crisis at this period. As Hooper said in a letter to Hoover:

the bulk of the shares [...] are held by the Exploration Co. and they consequently have to pay the calls thereon as required for working capital. Now if you out there shut down the mill for nine months or a year [...] you will see that this will take a very large slice out of the working capital and depress the value of shares. As I have said, the Exploration Co have to supply this working capital, and they unfortunately have not got too much ready cash so that such a proceeding would perhaps put them in a hole.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 7 July 1899. This is reinforced by a telegram to Hoover from Bewick, Moreing London, asking 'What do you estimate working expenses next three months. Can you finance without assistance' (Battye Library MN270, Acc. 1614A/1 - telegram 5c)

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 7 July 1899; *Leonora Miner*, 10 July 1899.

⁸⁶ Battye Library, MN 0294/1, Acc. 4793A/1, letter, Hooper to Hoover, 19 May 1898.

Hoover had been constantly denied permission to spend, or had to re-negotiate an overdraft with the company's local bank, and there was continuous correspondence between the London and Western Australian Exploration Company and Sons of Gwalia Company Ltd to querying the multifarious bills associated with the takeover, day-to-day working and development of the mine. He had far from a free hand.

Many have argued that Hoover laid the long-term foundations for future development of Sons of Gwalia vital to the longevity of the mine, and his vision for the mine is also not in doubt.⁸⁷ However, the early effects of his period as a manager were, labour troubles as a result of his policy of employment of Italians, cutting wages and increasing hours, over-management and bureaucracy, shareholder discontent as a result of no dividends, and a succession of short-term managers, of whom Hoover himself stayed the shortest. Only after Hoover's return to Western Australia as a Bewick, Moreing partner in 1902, did Loring's good work recover the financial viability of the mine. It was at this point that Hoover sold to Loring his own small interest in the Sons of Gwalia, which he had acquired as part of his appointment as manager in 1898, but which until that point had paid virtually no dividend. Loring, described in one newspaper as being more similar to George Hall in nature, was a far better man manager and practical implementer of Hoover's mine development plans.⁸⁸ Hoover was undoubtedly a brilliant strategist and planner and no one can doubt his major influence in the subsequent development of Bewick, Moreing's success in Western Australia, but this thesis argues strongly that his importance lay in his post-1902 period; notably in the introduction of production methods which were based on lowering working costs, and reduction of costs of treatment, together with a common-basis accounting system which enabled him to compare production across mines, and increase supervision on mine managers.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ For example, Richard G. Hartley, 'Mining and Processing at the Sons of Gwalia Mine' in Lenore Layman and Crienda Fitzgerald (eds.), *110° in the Waterbag*, p.126, 'While he [Hoover] held that post for less than a year, subsequent mine managers had to implement his plans for the mine'.

⁸⁸ *West Australian*, 23 October 1923; *Southern Cross Times*, 27 October 1923 'He (Loring) was like Hall in many ways, but had a much wider mining experience'.

⁸⁹ Richard G. Hartley, 'Mining and Processing at the Sons of Gwalia Mine' in Lenore Layman and Crienda Fitzgerald (eds.), *110° in the Waterbag*, pp.127; Glenn Vent, 'The standardization of Bewick, Moreing Cost Accounts' in Garry D. Carnegie and Peter W. Wolnizer (eds.), *Accounting History Newsletter, 1980-1989 and Accounting History, 1989-1994: A Tribute to Robert William Gibson* (New Works in Accounting History) (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996), pp.63-80.

All contemporary accounts, and indeed all those up to the period of Hall's death in 1915 and beyond into the late 1920s, indicate clearly that it was Hall during that period who was credited by the British and Australian press and mining world for developing the mine and opening up the goldfield. There was no mention in the contemporary press of Hoover's restructuring and development of Sons of Gwalia, though he was acknowledged early for his mining expertise in the Western Australian goldfields, and was frequently described (most often in Bewick, Moreing press releases in Coolgardie) in such terms as an 'eminently capable mining engineer'.⁹⁰ Hoover's period as manager, following on Castle and Hall's successful first two years, was marked by far less success, both in development terms and in financial benefit to his employers, than he claimed, and that most commentators credit.⁹¹ He overstated his salary significantly, and though he says he 'was carried for a small percentage interest', the letter from Ernest Williams giving him notice of the end of his six-month post made it clear during Hoover's tenure in Sons of Gwalia his share of the profits was nil, since there had been no profits.⁹² However, much Hoover's planned developments may have contributed to a longer-term future for the Sons of Gwalia, their short-term effect were mixed, to say the least. While one cannot question his subsequent success in Western Australia and elsewhere, his first period there has been overstated significantly.

In the 7 May 1898 first ordinary meeting of the Sons of Gwalia Company Limited, Edward Hooper, by now a Bewick, Moreing partner in London, referred to a

⁹⁰ *Australian Mail*, 5 January 1899.

⁹¹ George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Engineer*, p.82 states that under Hoover from August to October 1898 the mine produced a surplus of £7620; compared with Hoover's November 1897 forecasts for the mine ('profits in sight £75000'), this was minimal, and yet Nash admits it was quadruple the previous quarter's profit. None of this was distributed to shareholders as it should have been, but was ploughed back into the mine instead of the promised capital.

⁹² Battye Library Bewick, Moreing papers, MN 270/1, Ernest Williams' letter to H. C. Hoover, 17 October 1898. This letter gave Hoover notice of termination, as Williams said that the company could not afford his £500 as consulting engineer for the Northern goldfield work. He also noted that this meant also termination of Hoover's superintendency of Sons of Gwalia, since the one role was 'contingent on the other'. He also states that for 1897 there were no profits for distribution and 'I am afraid that for the first quarter of this year, we made no profits, but this can hardly have been a surprise for you, for you know how business was going the beginning of the year'. Williams also noted that John Jones (Bewick, Moreing's erection engineer), was amending Hoover's plans and '...you of course shall have a look at it for consideration and advice'. Despite Hoover's words in the cable of November 26 1897 to London 'cannot undertake responsibility [...] unless entire management designing machinery and plant in our hand', Hoover's lack of freedom of action is echoed time and again throughout his managership.

private letter he had received the previous week from Hoover which said ‘The mine is developing phenomenally and we have an entirely new lode nearly 5 ft wide assaying 30 dwts.’. The following three years however, did not bear out this promise, and it is arguable that it was Hoover’s grandiose plans for development, and the structures and organisation that he set up, that were at least partly responsible for the crisis that continued to affect the mine until Loring took over. That the long-term effect of implementation of Hoover’s plans was beneficial to the future prosperity and longevity of the mine is undisputed; nevertheless the shorter-term effects of Hoover’s tenure were largely negative.

It is not profitable to surmise what might have been the future of the mine if Hall had got his way, and had retained control, with sufficient additional stakeholder finance. It can certainly be argued that in the short term, it would have been significantly more profitable to shareholders; however, it must be extremely doubtful whether the mine would have had the same longevity or productiveness without the long-term vision of Hoover, and his emphasis on efficiency and reduction of working costs. It must always be borne in mind that despite Hall’s desire to retain the mine, the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency was in the business of taking short-term profits, not developing for the long haul. In addition, though Hall and Castle were universally popular with workers and businessmen alike in the Mount Margaret Goldfield, it is unlikely that his company would have been able to sustain and capitalize the mine through the coming crises in confidence in the share capital market, or attract the finance that would have carried the mine through barren spells of declining production in 1901-2. Hall’s own generosity, sociability, and free-spending nature would no doubt have also been a significant drain on the mine’s resources.

In conclusion, the chapter has dealt in detail with the events of the purchase, development, sale and flotation of the Sons of Gwalia mine, and its early years of operation. It has analysed the respective roles played by George W. Hall and Alexander Castle in those events, and the reality of the role played by Herbert Hoover in the period before he became manager, and his six months in charge. It has also acknowledged Hoover’s part in the longer-term success of the mine. In particular, it has argued strongly that Hall and Castle’s roles in the development of Sons of Gwalia

from its early days have been significantly under-represented and largely forgotten by critics and public opinion alike, As Hoover's international importance has grown, his role in the development of that mine between 1897 and 1901 has been substantially over-played, with a proportional diminution in the importance of Hall and Castle's roles. A readjustment of credit is long overdue.

Chapter 6

Nemesis: Hall after Sons of Gwalia, and in the Far East and Wales

This chapter focusses upon the change in fortunes, and public exposure that Hall experienced over the period following the Sons of Gwalia launch. An analysis of Hall's activities of necessity requires an overlap between this period and the previous two chapters. It covers the increasing scope of Hall's responsibilities, both in gold mine purchase and investment, and his growing social and political compass. It also considers how far his over-extension of fields of activity, covering not only the area around Leonora, but increasingly much further north to culminate in the vast workings of Wiluna, contributed to his downfall. It treats with his narrow defeat in the 1901 State legislature election, the personal and financial catastrophe of his divorce, and the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency's inability to provide the necessary investment to support his ambitious schemes. It highlights as the turning point the sudden death of Hall's key supporter, Alexander Castle, and the resultant decline and loss of direction that characterised his Wiluna activities. His activities in this period covered not only Australia and the United Kingdom, but also introduced a new dimension with subsequent ventures in China, Korea and once more back in Wales.

Hall's return in triumph from London in September 1898 saw no cessation in his activities, and indeed, the press reports showed an increase in the publicity engendered. He could now spend more time in the Coolgardie company office with Castle returning from Britain in April 1899 to manage the Star of Gwalia, Castle's family following him out to Australia by his family by October of that year.¹ Hall continued his mine-hunting expeditions in the north-eastern goldfields and that year saw a spate of purchases for the company, boosted by the fact that the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency had made a profit of £137,000 on their £50,000 capital in the preceding year as a result of the flotation.² The lease to the Euro mine, south of Laverton was another expensive purchase in August 1899,

¹ Deborah Watkins, family history monograph.

² *Mining Journal, Railway and Commercial Gazette*, 16 December 1899.

involving also considerable outlay on equipment. The London and Westralian floated Euro Gold Mines Limited in November of that year. It was reported that the company had a working capital of £45,000 together with the £8000 purchase price to the previous owners. London and Westralian shareholders were informed at their General Meeting that 'Mr Hall, who had been right in a great many cases, told them that the property they possessed was a second Sons of Gwalia'.³ An option was taken on Leonora's Great Boston mine the following year.⁴ Hall still had great credibility with the shareholders; the role of the 'man on the spot' was still as vital to the decision making of British companies as it was with politicians.⁵ Despite the improved communication that the telegraph and the opening of the Suez Canal had brought, it was still he whose decisions influenced whether investment capital was forthcoming. He had to convince them, and the best method of doing so was his physical presence and oral reports at company meetings; Hall's 1898 and 1900 visits to London were very influential in this respect. In between his visits, keeping his optimistic predictions in the newspapers was important to public confidence. When people stopped believing his reports, then the money would also stop.

By now, the Gwalia group of leases was still not performing because of a combination of excessive water and low-grade ore, and the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency was clearly overstretched, having had to pay dividends in shares rather than cash.⁶ The Agency went into voluntary liquidation at a special meeting on January 3 1900 and restructured, a typical Pritchard Morgan ploy to increase apparent wealth without any injection of capital.⁷ So as to maximize available capital finance through combining assets, they were forced to consolidate all the Gwalia holdings around the Sons of Gwalia, together with the North Star, into one Gwalia Consolidated (Consols) Company. Newspaper stories of losses by this new

³ *Ibid.*, 16 December 1899.

⁴ *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), November 2 1900; the leases were applied in the name of Alexander W. Castle. (*Index of Gold Mining Leases*, Department of Mines and Petroleum, Perth). The leases themselves have not survived.

⁵ Jeremy Mouat suggests (personal email to the author, 23 January 2013) that as the 'man on the spot', the role of Hall and other mining company managers in Western Australia could be compared with the roles of governors in the political field, analysed in John S. Galbraith's ' "The Turbulent Frontier" as a Factor in British Expansion', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 2. (1959/60), pp.150-168; also relevant is Alexander Schölch, 'The "Men on the Spot" and the English Occupation of Egypt in 1882', *The Historical Journal*, vol. 19: 3 (September 1976), pp.773-785 for the role of journalists and businessmen in influencing British political decision-making.

⁶ *Western Mail* (Perth), 20 January 1900.

⁷ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, February 15 1900.

company contrasted with the more positive reports on restructuring during Gwalia Consols General Meetings; such company reports always appeared, like Hall himself, to put a positive spin on the matter.⁸ Such restructuring, while appearing to increase capital, watered down the value of companies such as Gwalia Consols, as they had previously with Gwynfynydd and the London and Westralian. Pritchard Morgan was not alone in his doubtful dealings; the Bewick Moreing mine companies also restructured frequently at this time.

Even the Gwalia restructuring did not help, however, as water problems in the Star of Gwalia mine continued to negate its earlier promise, and with insufficient capital for more powerful pumping, all mining operations on these leases south of the Sons of Gwalia ceased. Before 1903, all these Gwalia leases were disposed of to the Sons of Gwalia Company, which with these then held a total of over 600 acres.⁹ Ironically, with Bewick, Moreing's greater resources once the backing of financier Francis Govett's syndicate had been assured, these relinquished leases were to form the backbone of the Sons of Gwalia's successful production over the ensuing decades.¹⁰ Hall had been perfectly right in predicting the line of the reefs, but with major water constraints proving insurmountable, his undercapitalised backers were unable to act on it.

Nevertheless, Hall was still positive and still travelling vast distances over the Mount Margaret and more northerly East Murchison goldfields in his four-in-hand waggon, surveying mines and taking up options, and his interviews were always sought and quoted. The *Morning Herald*, in addition to chronicling his mining exploits, highlighted his conviction that areas he had visited would provide good pastoral grazing potential in the 'Switzerland of West Australia' near Lake Carey.¹¹ Hall's interest now centred on the recently purchased Euro. By December 1900 this appeared a most productive venture, equipped at considerable expense with a 40-head

⁸ *West Australian* (Perth), 6 August 1900.

⁹ State Record Office, consignment 964, file 1896/5705

¹⁰ Peter Richardson, 'Collins House Financiers W.L.Baillieu, Lionel Robinson and Francis Govett' in R.T. Appleyard and C.T. Schedvin (eds.), *Australian Financiers*; H.C. Hoover, *Memoirs of Herbert Hoover, Years of Adventure*, p.78-9. Herbert Hoover had met Govett, an influential London investment banker and stockbroker on his return voyage to Australia in 1901.

¹¹ *The Cambrian* (Swansea), 29 September 1899, quoting the *Morning Herald* (Perth).

stamp.¹² Hall was spending money like water; he also took options on the British Flag holdings nearby, a massive 576 acres, and had paid a deposit on Mount Wilga, (probably the Wilga mine near Laverton), but subsequently did not take up the option.¹³

From 1900 on, however, the main focus of the Gwalia Consols Company shifted to Wiluna, on the edge of the Northern desert, whither in 1906-7 the Canning Stock Route was pioneered.¹⁴ Wiluna was a considerable distance further north than Leonora, but was in the same greenstone formation that is now known as the Norseman-Wiluna Belt, and had been assessed by Castle and Hall, as their arduous journeys of exploration through the spinifex headed further and further north. There were significant communication difficulties, no railway within many miles, and always a shortage of labour. Nevertheless Gwalia leases were pegged out at Lake Way, Wiluna, and the Essex mine, adjacent to the previously acquired Lake Violet lease in the same field, was purchased.¹⁵ It will be argued later in this chapter that it was this goldfield that was to prove the final undoing of Hall and the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency. The extended Gwalia Consols mine, though undoubtedly extremely rich, never lived up to its early years' potential while in the ownership of the London and Westralian. Though the lodes were massively broad, and oxidised ore was initially easily accessible by open cast working, the Gwalia leases at Wiluna all proved extremely difficult to extract gold successfully at lower levels; this was caused by a combination of a large quantity of low-grade ore, and great complexity and expense in the process of extraction. Many experimental methods failed to separate more than a fraction of the gold that was later proved to be there, and in the quantities that Hall had predicted.

1900 had been an extremely busy year for Hall and on the surface, matters appeared to be going excellently. He was regularly quoted back in Swansea as a

¹² *Western Mail* (Perth), 22 December 1900.

¹³ *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 25 August 1899.

¹⁴ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 30 March 1907; *The Australasian* (Melbourne) 3 August 1907; *West Australian* (Perth), 23 May 1936. The aim of A. W. Canning's survey of the over 1,000 mile route from the Kimberley area to Wiluna was to find a route for cattle to be driven overland to the mining areas of Western Australia, with the aim of reducing the price of food supplies.

¹⁵ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 28 January 1902.

successful mining magnate.¹⁶ North Star was producing well, and Castle was active taking up leases on behalf of Hall and the London and Westralian, including travelling to Wiluna, where, in addition to the purchase of the Essex mine, further leases were pegged out for the Lake Violet mine. Castle became a Leonora JP, and Hall a JP in Malcolm. The latter was also appointed one of 22 Queens' Commissioners charged with collecting industrial and agricultural exhibits for the Western Australian Pavilion at the 1900 Paris International Exhibition. By November, Hall, together with others including Bewick, Moreing's former agent, Edward Hooper, and two other Welshmen, Hoover's nemesis Ernest Williams and mine-owner Alfred Morgans, had also been appointed Queen's Commissioners for the subsequent 1901 Glasgow International Exhibition.¹⁷

The material for these exhibitions included, naturally enough, gold-bearing ore from the Sons of Gwalia mine as well as Alfred Morgans' Mount Morgans mine; the Western Australia mining exhibit was awarded the chief prize for the mining category in the French capital.¹⁸ In April and May of 1900, Hall had been responsible for their collection and dispatch to Paris and later in the year he travelled himself via Marseilles to London—where his bullish interview forecast that the Mount Margaret field would equal the big mines of Kalgoorlie—and thence to Paris. He anticipated that the railway to Malcolm and Leonora, with a branch to Laverton, would mean that the large bodies of ore, even of low pennyweight value, if easily milled, would prove economical to mine. He also pointed out that the capital of the companies he represented in Western Australia amounted to over £4,000,000 and that he therefore said he had to hurry back to the colony by September.¹⁹ Despite this assertion, he remained until January 1901, and this visit also saw several celebration banquets in his honour and a 'Sons of Gwalia' concert in the Cory Hall, Cardiff, together with his visit to Paris to the International Exhibition.²⁰ A bravura piece of raconteurship at a dinner in his honour at the end of September, once more at the Hotel Cécil, had the audience eating out of his hand as he recounted acquiring the Euro mine for a shilling

¹⁶ *The Cambrian* (Swansea), 12 January 1900 and 6 February 1900, among others.

¹⁷ *West Australian* (Perth), 10 November 1900.

¹⁸ *Tasmanian Examiner*, 20 August 1900.

¹⁹ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 20 September 1900, quoting an earlier *British Australasian* interview.

²⁰ *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 2 November 1900.

deposit under Bewick, Moreing's noses, adventures with Castle and lost horses, and an encounter in Western Australia with a Welshman from Llanfachreth. The same article, however, revealed also Hall's typically colonial attitude towards the Aboriginal Australians, of whom he recounted:

In the early days... we had considerable trouble with the natives. They believed more in looting the white man's camp than in hunting snakes. Of course they live on snakes and when they saw the white man come they thought he had come to hunt their snakes and take away from them their means of livelihood... They are very primitive in their habits and their garments. As a matter of fact, you could clothe at least a decent tribe with an ordinary postage stamp (loud laughter).²¹

The whole speech, over 5000 words, was reported verbatim in the *Cambrian*, the Swansea weekly newspaper. After his departure for Western Australia, the *Cambrian* also celebrated his success as a former resident of Swansea and published an account of his analysis of the market in London. He said that:

Those who had money to invest... looked upon West Australia as the country in which the officials of the mines made the pull by either 'bulling' or 'bearing' stocks from the colony in conjunction with financial magnates in London. Country shareholders who were interested in the West Australian mines and who knew many of the managers out here had a different idea and looked upon the London directors as the 'niggers in the fence'. But the terminal result was the same—distrust.

He continued that many French, German and Belgian investors had been attracted to Western Australian concerns by the Paris exhibition and to his own mines and added, 'the people of England have not lost confidence in West Australia... but so far they have no confidence in the people who manipulate the market at home'.²² Even so, the visit had given him an opportunity to raise much needed capital for the Gwalia Consols, and his return saw more investment for equipment at the North Star mine, which had shut down in his absence. However, by later in 1901, production at that mine was again beginning to tail off. An acerbic shareholder's letter late in that year was among the first to cast doubts on Hall, and suggested liquidation of both London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency, and Gwalia Consols.²³

²¹ *The Cambrian* (Swansea), October 5 1900.

²² *The Cambrian* (Swansea), 8 March 1901, quoting the *Morning Herald* (Adelaide).

²³ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 14 December 1901.

While in London, Hall had also informed the London press of his strong opposition to the cash-strapped Western Australian legislature's proposals to impose federal tariffs on imports of capital needed to purchase mining equipment, pointing out that this would significantly reduce the flow of British capital and impair the state's development.²⁴ Other London-based companies operating in Western Australia, and a delegation on behalf of the London Chamber of Commerce also voiced similar objections and the measure was subsequently withdrawn.²⁵ By 1901 he was an executive member of the Western Australian Chamber of Mines, newly formed by an amalgamation of the Coolgardie (1895) and Perth (1897) Mining Chambers. His public status and fame during 1900-01 were at their highest point, even though below the surface, matters were not at all satisfactory, financially or in his family life.

The mining industry at this period created opportunities for advancement in politics also, and increasingly influenced Western Australian policy-makers. Alfred Morgans had already been elected to the Western Australian Legislature in 1897 as member for Coolgardie.²⁶ Nevertheless, the major power still rested in the Perth to Albany axis despite the agitation by mining representatives such as Hall for better goldfields representation. As early as September 1899, Hall had been invited by Mount Margaret Goldfield businessmen to stand for election to the Legislature; he was quoted as having promised a supply of free ice until the election, an extravagant promise if ever there was one, but typical of Hall's free-spending and over-generous gestures.²⁷ On his way to attend the Paris exhibition in 1900, he was asked if he intended to contest the newly-created Mount Margaret constituency and replied:

There is no other constituency in the whole colony [...] that I would care about representing—supposing I were anxious to go in to parliament, which I am not. I have been identified with Mount Margaret since its commencement as a

²⁴ *Economist*, 9 Nov 1901, Dalgetty and Co. AGM, cited in Andrew Dilley, '“The rules of the game”: London Finance, Australia, and Canada, c.1900–14', p.1018.

²⁵ *Chamber of Commerce Journal*, March 1902, cited in Andrew Dilley, '“The rules of the game”: London Finance, Australia, and Canada, c.1900–14', p.1018.

²⁶ *West Australian* (Perth), 6 May 1897.

²⁷ 'Acta Diurna' columnist, *West Australian Sunday Times*, 3 September 1899.

goldfield. Its fortunes and my own are so closely bound together that perhaps I take a keener interest in its welfare than any other man does.²⁸

Despite this assertion, his public and press image and the perception of his being its leading citizen meant that it was no surprise when he offered himself as candidate for Mount Margaret in 1901. His consistent commitment to these goldfields once more showed, as it had in his previous life in Swansea, his absolute identification with the area where he worked and lived, and his desire to fight for its people and institutions. Several newspaper reports of the time even described him as ‘Daddy Gwalia’. He was the firm favourite of the media and of prominent citizens of the area to gain the seat. Though he admitted he was not a direct Labor candidate, he said he supported their principles, and also payment for members of the legislature, a favourite Labor policy that enabled working men who had no capital behind them to stand for election.²⁹ His campaign platform included fighting for railways beyond Leonora, to Laverton and Lawlers, and a line from Kalgoorlie to Esperance on the south coast, so as to break Fremantle’s monopolies in supplies and commodities. He also supported a transcontinental railway, grants for prospectors, labour arbitration courts and a mining college. He stated he would sit upon the opposition benches until increased representation and justice was obtained for the goldfields.³⁰ The press and the business community was overall extremely supportive of Hall and regarded his election as a foregone conclusion; indeed his Labor opponent George Taylor, resorted to an extraordinary attack upon ‘a crawling and servile Press, bought by Mr Hall to hound him [Taylor] down’.³¹ However, the *Westralian Worker* doubted what it described as Hall’s recent commitment to democracy and Labor, and asserted that ‘Hall cannot serve his friends of the Pritchard Morgan stamp and the men who have earned their bread by their own toil’.³² Also a key meeting in Leonora late in the campaign where Hall was accused of lying by saying he could not get a copy of the ‘Labor platform’, may well have swayed opinion. Though the President of the Workers’ Association had to admit at the meeting that Hall was telling the truth, an amendment was moved that a direct Labor candidate was the only person fit and

²⁸ *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 29 June 1900.

²⁹ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 19 March 1901.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 26 March 1901.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 30 April 1901.

³² *Westralian Worker*, 12 April 1901.

proper to represent the district.³³ It may well be that it was this event that caused Hall to go down to a narrow 62-vote defeat; it can be convincingly argued that this defeat was his first real setback in his hitherto booming career and social position.

Worse was to follow. The financial climate in which Hall's Australian ventures were launched had never been a favourable one and his transnational role, linking the money markets of London and the mines of Australia, meant he was affected by events in both locations. In the introduction to the thesis it was postulated that Hall was unlucky in that he was too late for the age in which he lived as the initial Western Australian boom had passed its peak, leaving him continually struggling to find capital. Certainly, from its peak in 1895, by 1897 the euphoria of the first wave of Western Australian investment had evaporated. Van Oss had warned as early as 1896 that Westralian mining shares involved far more speculation and profit-taking than investment.³⁴ George Hall confirmed this during his stay in London in 1900, saying there was far more paper than money about. He considered that the 'general investing public... had not yet come in to the West Australian market and did not look upon the mines in Western Australia as desirable properties to invest in'.³⁵ This he attributed to mine owners and managers manipulating stocks in conjunction with financial managers in London, creating an atmosphere of distrust among general investors. Appleyard and Mel Davies considered that speculators were making a lottery of the business of company flotation.³⁶ They also emphasised it was mainly British investment, rather than capital from other Australian colonies, that had sustained the short-lived Western Australian boom of 1894-6. By December 1900 the spectacular crash in Whitaker Wright's Kalgoorlie mine companies led to severe depression in the London market.³⁷

Even the Bewick, Moreing company, later all-powerful, was only marginally better off than the London and Westralian at this time. It found it difficult to raise

³³ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 16 April 1901.

³⁴ S.F. Van Oss, 'The Westralian Mining Boom', pp.719.

³⁵ *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 1 January 1901.

³⁶ R.T. Appleyard and Melville Davies, 'Financiers of Western Australia's Goldfields' in R.T. Appleyard and C.B. Schedvin (eds.), *Australian Financiers*, pp.162-164.

³⁷ *Western Mail* (Cardiff), 29 December 1900; *Hansard*, 19 February 1903, vol.118 cc.347-58, where Liberal MP George Lambert outlined the history of the London and Globe crash and associated illegal activities; also R.T. Appleyard and Melville Davies, 'Financiers of Western Australia's Goldfields' in R.T. Appleyard and C.B. Schedvin (eds.), *Australian Financiers* p.173.

sufficient capital in London for mine development, and made little profit over the period.³⁸ During 1898, Hoover's Sons of Gwalia mine account had been constantly overdrawn and it will be remembered Sons of Gwalia shareholders, including Pritchard Morgan, accused the company of misapplying profits to reinvest in the mine. Wars and threats of wars also affected the market badly; by 1900 Britain was still involved in the Sudan, South Africa was in the throes of armed struggle, and incursions into China were also dangerous. The second South African War meant further uneasiness in financial markets, and shaky public confidence. Canada was always more popular with British investors than Australia, and South Africa also diverted substantial investment.³⁹

Indeed, during the period between 1900 and 1902, though on the surface Hall appeared so successful in public life, his private situation was deteriorating. Whilst he was ostensibly an extremely wealthy member of Adelaide society, his personal expenditure on his family and home at 3, The Avenue, Medindie, Adelaide, was extravagant, and his business affairs were forever threatened by shortage of capital.⁴⁰

Among his business travails also, was a court case resulting from the commission in shares allocated to him and Morgan by Bewick, Moreing at the time of the sale of Sons of Gwalia. London and Westralian fellow director David Richards, another Welsh financial entrepreneur from Hirwaun, had pocketed this commission, which Pritchard Morgan averred should have been paid to him and Hall, with Richards only acting as an intermediary.⁴¹ The ever-litigious Pritchard Morgan therefore brought a High Court action in 1901, also involving Hall. However, since the case had not been brought for over two years following the sale of Sons of Gwalia, it was thrown out by the judge, with loss not only of the value of shares, but

³⁸ George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Engineer*, p.228. 'Upon entering the firm he [Hoover] discovered that its profits had averaged a paltry £7,000 a year for the past several years'.

³⁹ Andrew Dilley, ' "The rules of the game": London Finance, Australia and Canada, c.1900-14, pp.1008-14.

⁴⁰ George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover; the Engineer*, pp.226-230 outlines the financially painful effects after 1901 of the 'transition to sounder systematic mining—romance to business' in gold-mining; Medindie means 'My land'. The Avenue house cost £2500 in October 1898 and though paid for by Hall was registered in Martha Mary Hall's name. Hall's expenditure on Martha Mary's living expenses amounted to over £12,000 between 1897 and 1902. The Avenue is still one of Adelaide's most prestigious residential streets and Medindie the most expensive house purchase area in South Australia.

⁴¹ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 5 February 1901 and 12 February 1901.

also significant court costs to both Hall and Morgan. Interestingly, even though Morgan would not appear to have been a forgiving type, Richards, who represented the London and Westralian as a director on the Sons of Gwalia board, later featured as a director in others of Morgan's companies, including Gwalia Consolidated and the Eastern Pioneer.

Hall's letter to his wife in August 1901 referred to the pending Sons of Gwalia share case in London, where the judge refused to allow him to give evidence 'on commission' (i.e. other than in person); he wrote that Pritchard Morgan required him to go to England to give evidence. He stated that he could not possibly do so with the mines in their present state:

I might just as well go into bankruptcy court at once as to leave them as they are. If I could only get this one mine paying dividends I could wait for the others, but there has been no rain here for over 12 months and there wont be any now until next winter. Meanwhile I have spent thousands of pounds searching for subterranean supplies but at present without success.⁴²

In addition his health was far from good, as he was still suffering bouts of 'retching and phlegm' from the after-effects of influenza the previous year. He stated that he would send his wife Martha Mary her monthly allowance as long as he could afford to do so, which 'unless things mend won't be for very long'.⁴³ He said that Pritchard Morgan had cabled him for £2500 to carry on the case; he averred that he would rather lose the £60,000 involved than worry any longer about it. 'As far as I can see I am the only one who will lose anything in the end & I would rather lose it at the beginning or rather now & if I only get health I am sure to make another fortune'. As well as illustrating the immense sums of money with which he was dealing (£60,000 is the equivalent of over £6 million today), this reveals the pressures on him that his mines and business affairs, not to mention his ill-health, were creating.

⁴² Letter headed Euro Gold Mines, Limited, to Martha Mary Hall, 11 August 1901, submitted in evidence to the Hall divorce court hearing, 19 August 1902, personal papers of Irma F. Wigley (author's private collection); Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/2, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988.

⁴³ Letter by G W. Hall to his wife, Martha Mary Hall, 19 August 1901 submitted in evidence to the divorce hearing 19 August 1902, personal papers of Irma F. Wigley.

His family circumstances certainly added to this pressure. His wife Martha Mary's extremely expensive tastes meant she frequently overspent her allowance, and their home in Adelaide was one of the finest houses of the city. Though Hall was frequently away from Adelaide for many months, his grand-daughter Irma Wigley recounted that when he returned, he used to regale his wife and children with gifts, and that his visits were eagerly awaited.⁴⁴ He and Martha Mary had an uneasy relationship throughout his period in Australia.⁴⁵ Indeed his grand-children used to say that his headstrong wife had come out to Australia without telling him, and when she arrived in Albany in March 1896, he had packed her off to Adelaide, saying that the Western Australian goldfields were no place to raise a family. However, the *Kalgoorlie Western Argus* at this time suggested that he had attempted to find a house for them in Fremantle or Albany before deciding upon Adelaide.⁴⁶ Between 1900 and 1902 a major rift developed in the marriage, with Martha Mary refusing to visit Hall in Western Australia, or allow the children to visit him. He himself reached a point where he made clear he did not wish to have anything further to do with his wife:

I refuse to be made a convenience of any longer but for the children's sake I will make you as I said before your present allowance while I can afford it & while I live, but I expressly desire never to see you again. I should like to see the children & shall be glad if during the next month they can come over here & rough it for a few weeks with me in these northern goldfields.⁴⁷

By 1901 also there was more negative press coverage about Hall, mainly originating from disgruntled London and Westralian shareholders. A letter in the *Financial Times* referred to 'shareholders losing all faith in Mr Hall's opinion', quoting the drop in Sons of Gwalia share value and Hall's over-sanguine reports on the Gwalia properties, and pointing out that the London and Westralian recent dividend was actually a repayment to shareholders of their own subscribed capital.⁴⁸ In May 1901 the 'Never Can Tell' mine at Lawlers, north of Leonora was purchased

⁴⁴ Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/1, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988.

⁴⁵ Correspondence 1980-88, between George W. Hall, Ludlow and Irma F. Wigley, author's private collection.

⁴⁶ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 29 July 1902.

⁴⁷ Letter by George W. Hall to Martha Mary Hall, headed North Star Gold Mines Limited, 24 August 1901, submitted in evidence to the Hall divorce court hearing, 19 August 1902, personal papers of Irma F. Wigley.

⁴⁸ *Financial Times*, 5 November 1901.

for a reputed £10,000. After initial rich pickings, this mine was re-sold for an undisclosed (but much lower) sum to Bewick, Moreing early in 1902.⁴⁹

Continued unrest in 1901 after the Whitaker Wright crash caused a significant collapse in the Western Australian market, and the chairman of the relaunched and recapitalized London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency was forced to admit at its general meeting that though Hall's inspection of the Sons of Gwalia had provided a satisfactory report, they were being blamed for not having sold their shares in that mine earlier.⁵⁰ He said they had also needed to suspend operations at the suddenly-failing North Star mine, and the Gwalia Consolidated group, mainly based on the Star and Prince of Gwalia leases to the south of Sons of Gwalia, had failed to realize expectations. Nevertheless, the directors at that date still continued to hold out hopes for the Euro mine and the Never can Tell, and there was a report on the Lake Violet Consols mine pegged out by Castle, and purchased on Hall's recommendation. But the mood in the meeting was sombre, and shareholders questioned the accounts. Hall was still buying properties, but his credibility was slipping.

He made one more attempt to revive the North Star, the *Malcolm Chronicle* early in 1902 reporting:

... it almost seems like old times in Malcolm this week to hear the North Star stampers in full swing, and judging by results to date, Malcolm is going to wear a bright appearance for some time to come.⁵¹

Hall was back on the Malcolm bench as a J.P., and with religion having been important to him throughout his life, he was active as a lay preacher.⁵² Unfortunately the mine's revival was not sustained, with North Star again being worked by tributors in the following year.⁵³ In June 1902 he was afforded a farewell banquet at Webb's

⁴⁹ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 7 May 1901; *Western Mail* (Perth), 5 April 1902.

⁵⁰ *The Times*, 9 November 1901.

⁵¹ *Malcolm Chronicle*, 11 April 1902.

⁵² Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/1, Papers of G. W. Hall 1895-1988.

⁵³ Tributors worked on contracts, generally in unsuccessful or worked-out mines, and often neglecting safety regulations, to blast out the last scraps of ore from worked-out stopes. They took the risks, and the majority of any profits that could be gained. See Larry Lankton, *Cradle to Grave: Life, Work, and Death at the Lake Superior Copper Mines* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.65 for a succinct analysis of tributors' operations.

Hotel in the new township of Euro, as he prepared to leave for London on yet another visit to raise capital.⁵⁴

However, this journey had to be postponed, as Hall, the successful self-promoter and manipulator of the media, suffered the greatest ignominy over subsequent months, when he and his wife became the focus of the most scandalous divorce case to hit Adelaide in a decade. For a whole month, from 25 July to 26 August, the daily headlines and major stories of the *Adelaide Advertiser* and *The Register*, featured a blow-by-blow account of Martha Mary Hall's alleged infidelity with a Unitarian minister, the Reverend Alexander Wilson.⁵⁵ These accounts in turn were heavily quoted in many newspapers in the Western Goldfields and the courthouse was full throughout. The irony of this case, bearing in mind Hall's admiration in Swansea days for that town's Unitarian minister, is compounded by the fact that his wife's lover carried the first two names of his faithful partner, Castle.

This scandal was complicated by Mrs Hall's allegations of blackmail against some of their servants, and damning evidence against her by her own niece Kate Belt, who was resident as a companion/governess. Hall, cross-examined on a counter-suggestion by his wife of his own impropriety, admitted that he had been in the habit of presenting nuggets and nugget brooches to ladies with whom he was acquainted and wives of mine officers; he said that a lady referred to was a frequent visitor to his wife, and that he had given her a ring.⁵⁶ The court heard that when his wife queried this, he had told her he received information from the lady that had enabled him to make several thousands of pounds. Though Martha Mary Hall's allegation was dismissed, this incident confirms earlier indications that Hall, always extremely generous, and still with an eye for the ladies, could be fully as extravagant as his wife.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ *Malcolm Chronicle and Leonora Advertiser*, 13 June 1902.

⁵⁵ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 29 July 1902; *Adelaide Advertiser*, 25 July, 1902, 9,20,21,23,26, August 1902; *The Register* (Adelaide), 25,26 July, 9,12,13,15,16,20-23,26,27 August 1902 and released evidence from previous days on 9 August, *Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal*, 25 July 1902 among many others; decree absolute, *Adelaide Advertiser*, 11 March 1903.

⁵⁶ *Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal*, 26 July 1902; *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 31 July 1902.

⁵⁷ Battye Library, MN1519, Acc.4797A/2, Court Reported Register, Adelaide, Petition by George W Hall, evidence of 27 July 1902 by his wife's niece Kate Belt. 'Mr Hall made a practice of bringing presents for his wife and children as well as herself and the servants whenever he came home.

This whole saga must have been most galling for Hall, to find himself and his family exposed in such a way to salacious media coverage, where he had been so accustomed to feeding the stories, and providing interviews on his own terms to mining correspondents. The press, which he had used to 'boost' his mines and to encourage shareholders to invest, was not a medium that could be controlled so easily. Massive costs were incurred for two Kings' Counsels, one on either side, and several other lawyers over such an extended period. In addition his wife's adultery (since the evidence of regular surreptitious visits by Wilson, the minister, unlaced clothing, and goings-on behind locked doors was quite conclusive), was a social death-blow.⁵⁸ The three sons left their local St. Peter's School and boarded for the next eighteen months at Hahndorf Academy, under the guardianship of their father's counsel, Sir Josiah Symon while he and Violet were away in Britain. Having won his case, Hall, with typical generosity, forfeited the costs that he had been awarded against his wife, allowing her to remain in the family home, which was in her name, on the condition that the children would inherit it. She had no such compunctions and by February 1904 had sold the house and moved to Melbourne.

It was no wonder following this case, that finally in September 1902, accompanied by his daughter Violet, together with her companion, Irma Royce, he took his postponed visit to London, ostensibly seeking more capital, but also as an opportunity to remove himself from the public eye and scandal-mongering of South Australian society. In that city he ensconced his party for over twelve months in a suite at the Hotel Cécil on the Strand, the height of London luxury. There, Violet received singing lessons from Dame Clara Novello Davies, the celebrated Welsh diva and mother of Ivor Novello. Once more, Hall's actions hardly helped his mining ventures or indeed his finances. Castle was left unsupported to run the increasingly complex and financially fraught Gwalia Consolidated, particularly the mines at Wiluna, having to finance development through the gold they produced, rather than

He was always kind, gentle and forbearing in the treatment of his wife and was an indulgent father'.

⁵⁸ http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/archivaldocs/prg/PRG88_7_1-122-Spence_letters_transcript.pdf, accessed 13 December 2014. Letters PRG88 7 16-21 gave the views of Catherine. H. Spence, a noted feminist activist and member of the Adelaide Unitarian church on the divorce; she supported Wilson and considered that he had been wronged.

by any injection of capital subscription from the parent company. Though Hall from November 1902 onward busied himself in London with seeking additional funds for the Gwalia ventures, money was by now exceedingly tight on the market, where continued stock market depression and the second South African War had limited resources considerably. His own personal extravagance at the Hotel Cécil cannot have helped.

Interviewed for the *British Australasian* in London soon after his arrival, he was still characteristically bullish, praising the management of the majority of Western Australian mines, and insisting if costs could be reduced, dividends would increase. This interview was widely quoted in other Australian newspapers.⁵⁹ He admitted that lack of capital was hindering the outlying districts—those very areas in which he had interests—but stated that in spite of the recent depression in Westralian mining shares, the intrinsic value of some mines had increased. He referred specifically to the Sons of Gwalia, which had not been paying dividends for two years, praised the new manager Mr Loring for cutting out the surplus management, and forecast immediate improvement, with £8000 to £10,000 a month profit as a result of Loring's 'marked changes'.⁶⁰ The *Kalgoorlie Argus* reported also Hall's views on what he considered the fine prospects of Gwalia Consolidated. However, the reality was that by this date the original leases surrounding the Sons of Gwalia mine, which had been already amalgamated under the Gwalia Consols title, had already been abandoned and sold to Bewick, Moreing.⁶¹ The Great Boston mine had also proved another unsuccessful venture.⁶²

The mines in Wiluna, where Gwalia Consols had purchased leases in the Lake Way Goldfield in 1899, were immediately hit by massive floods in 1900, following

⁵⁹ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 6 December 1902; *Western Mail* (Perth), 13 December 1902; *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 30 December 1902, all quoted the report from the *British Australasian*, 6 November 1902.

⁶⁰ See chap. 5 for a fuller account of Loring's reforms.

⁶¹ Hall had been perfectly correct that the Sons of Gwalia lode carried on in a southerly direction and at a greater depth, but it needed better pumping power and more effective crushing methods than the underfinanced and overcautious London and Westralian could supply, to make the ore payable.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 29 January 1901

28 inches of rain.⁶³ Vast areas, including the entire town and all the mines, were under water for a considerable period. Such untypical problems, in an area where the following year, Hall was complaining about difficulties of finding regular supplies of water, delayed development considerably and caused much damage to equipment. In addition because of the lack of London and Westralian capital, manager Alexander Castle, over the subsequent years, always needed to re-invest any gold produced to pay for equipment to meet the increasing problem of complex refractory sulphided ore, and the consequent drain on profits of treating ore that was certainly payable, but of low grade. The decision by James Gardiner, the Western Australian treasurer to raise a five per cent duty on the dividends of companies carrying out business in Western Australia also did not help British investor confidence; Hall in the Perth *Western Mail* commented critically that taxing British capital would damage investment.⁶⁴

Indeed, for much of the remainder of 1902 and during 1903, Hall's newspaper exposure in London was limited, and what news there was from his north-eastern goldfields ventures continued to be unfavourable. The Essex mine at Wiluna had to be shut down in 1902, with equipment being transferred from the Essex and the Black Swan mines to bring the Lake Violet leases in the same locality into full production. In addition, further south near Laverton, the Euro mine, in which the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency had invested so much money and new equipment from Britain, declined rapidly after its initial success. Though this had been an extremely rich prospect when purchased by Hall in 1899, hampered by an extreme lack of water, it was abandoned.⁶⁵ It eventually made a loss of over £60,000 for Euro Gold Mines Ltd. and the London and Westralian.⁶⁶

Back in Malcolm the sudden decline in North Star had cut off what had been a dependable source of income to supply the London and Westralian with development

⁶³ P. R. Heydon, *Wiluna, Edge of the Desert* (Carlisle: Hesperian Press on behalf of Wiluna Mines Ltd., 1996), p.16.

⁶⁴ *Western Mail* (Perth), 13 December 1902, quoting the *British Australasian*, 6 November 1902.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 22 December 1900, special mining supplement, and *Ibid.*, 13 December 1902.

⁶⁶ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 20 January 1903. The Euro mine was described as 'practically valueless', and the 40-head battery was later sold off to Bewick, Moreing. Yet a subsequently syndicate obtained good returns; it was taken up also by Claude de Bernales' Westralian Machinery Corporation, Bernales regretting later that he had to give it up because of a lack of capital. Even as late as 1935 it was producing small but rich finds.

capital over the previous six years. Early in 1903, the *Malcolm Chronicle* stated this mine was again being worked by tributors.⁶⁷ The same edition noted that Hall had overdrawn his director's salary by £721 without the other directors' permission and that the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency were considering legal action to recover it. By September of the same year the North Star lease had been forfeited, but Hall, though close to his lowest ebb financially, was still spending lavishly at the Hotel Cécil in London.

His return to Western Australia in November 1903 prompted an interview that was less bullish than usual. He said that 'no sooner did the market for Western Australian ventures seemed to be improving than some fresh scandal would crop up and knock the market back'. He warned again that shareholders were regarding Western Australian mining as matter for speculation rather than investment, and were demanding high returns. He considered that those investing in Western Australia 'generally speaking... are looking upon this State simply as a field for gambling in stocks and not for developing mines'.⁶⁸ The months following his return represented a period of even further decline in Hall's fortunes. The Gwalia Consols (Lake Violet) mine at Wiluna, which has already referred to, was a very large undertaking indeed. It was an immense open cast pit; the lode was a chain —22 yds.—wide. Hall had initially pegged out the leases in his own name and transferred them to Gwalia Consols in March 1902.⁶⁹ Pritchard Morgan and he were totally committed financially to this mine, as they were by far the majority shareholders, and needed its success. However, over the next three years Hall's ever-dependable manager, Castle, was left increasingly to face the problems of developing this mine with little support. A fire, which blew up the powder magazine in 1904, added to his problems.

From this point also, two decisive occurrences struck at the heart of Hall's effectiveness and his ability to finance and run the mine. The first was the liquidation of the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency. As has been noted earlier, this company had been the vehicle that Pritchard Morgan and Hall had used to start

⁶⁷ *Malcolm Chronicle and Leonora Advertiser*, 10 January 1903.

⁶⁸ *Western Mail* (Perth), 28 November 1903.

⁶⁹ Register entries 5 March 1902 for Gold Mining Leases, 6J, 7J and 8J, Lake Violet Consols, Lake Violet Consols South and Lake Violet Consols West, Department of Mines and Petroleum, Perth, Western Australia.

their Western Australian ventures in 1895. Undercapitalised, with no more than £12,000 initial capital, it had been a typical child of the Western Australian gold boom which resulted in up to 780 mining companies registered in England by 1896, of which few survived to 1900.⁷⁰ Also the London and Westralian had been relatively late in the field. The Sons of Gwalia sale early on had brought massive dividends to its shareholders, the chief of whom were chairman Sir William Ingram together with Pritchard Morgan and Hall and their families.⁷¹ By July 1898, the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency was capitalized at 50,000 £1 shares, but the need for further capital had seen restructuring in May 1900 where a total of 349,000 shares were issued. 300,000 of these were, however, just so much paper issued to existing shareholders, and a total of less than £35,000 capital was available of the original £50,000 called up. Abandonment of the leases around Sons of Gwalia saw over 200,000 shares of the London and Westralian's Gwalia Consols holding written off, and the remainder written down from £1 a share to 2s 6d. Though the future Shell Oil magnate, young Calouste Gulbenkian, newly arrived in London, had seen fit to join the board of directors, he resigned before the December 1903 meeting, clearly concerned about pressing creditors, and the likely cost to him of honouring his guarantee as a director. There is little doubt that his resignation, together with that of his co-director, wealthy Kirkaldy manufacturer John Barry who had been one of the original shareholders, tipped the balance for the remaining directors. William Ingram, who had been chairman since 1895, also asked to be released from the post; Company Secretary S.W.Paddon, who chaired the meeting in his stead, said that:

At the last meeting Sir William Ingram stated that so far from the company owning properties which Mr Hall estimated were worth £4,000,000, he doubted very much whether, if the debts were paid and the property realised, they would have as many pence. Sir William was right...⁷²

By this stage therefore, Hall's stock had dropped to a very low level, even with his closest allies.

⁷⁰ J.W. McCarty, 'British Investment in Western Australian Gold Mining', 1894-1914, *University Studies in History*, vol. 4, no.1 (1961-62), p.12, cited in George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover, The Engineer*, p.226.

⁷¹ National Archive record, BT31/6419/45319, London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency.

⁷² *The Times*, 31 December 1903.

The general meeting of 30 December 1903 recorded significant debts, despite two recent dividends from the company's Sons of Gwalia shares, and a decision was made, confirmed in February 1904, to wind up the company. By the completion of the liquidation in 1905, the 75,800 Gwalia shares that the company distributed to its shareholders were worth less than 15/- and a final derisory cash distribution of just over 3d was made for each London and Westralian share.⁷³ Thus the company that had been the main backers of Gwalia Consols was no longer available to fall back on as it had been previously, and a loan of £4000 to Gwalia Consols listed in the liquidation was also outstanding.

Now bereft of its parent company's backing, Gwalia Consols continued to have the same liquidity troubles that finished off the London and Westralian. A previous shareholders' meeting on 22 December 1903 had received adverse reports. The subsequent meeting on 23 November 1904 were so concerned about lack of profit on the high expenditure needed to treat the refractory arsenopyritic ore, that they set up a committee of inquiry with the brief to spend up to £1000 on further development before deciding whether to go into liquidation or not. At the shareholders' meeting on 8 June 1905, it appeared initially that matters had turned the corner. The committee of inquiry the previous year reported through Pritchard Morgan that Castle's telegrams indicated reserves of 110,000 tons estimated to contain £208,000 worth of gold, or 'more than 4 times the issued capital of the company'. He said that though average value of gold was only 8 dwt 18 gr. a ton, and extraction costs had been high, recent costs of treatment were only 19s 5d a ton. Castle was reported to be extracting 84% of gold showing an estimated future profit of 9s 8d a ton.⁷⁴ Though a majority agreed it was worth carrying on mining, John Barry had taken advice from an engineer who claimed to have been in the district who had told him that 'it was useless spending another shilling on development and only throwing away money'. Barry strongly dissented from the committee report saying that the cost of crushing and treatment absorbed the value of the tailings, that the mine was too low grade to be payable, and that the company should be put into liquidation and the remaining assets distributed to shareholders. The influential Barry, who had previously left the London and

⁷³ National Archive record, BT34/1653/64713, London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency.

⁷⁴ *The Times*, 9 July 1905; *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 14 July 1905.

Westralian, precipitating its liquidation, subsequently resigned from this board of directors also.⁷⁵

However, the greatest blow to Hall and to the future prospects of the Wiluna mines was the death of Alexander Wilson Castle. Concerned by rumours of a Bewick, Moreing takeover of the property's management, Castle had travelled to Coolgardie by coach to investigate, and during the return journey collapsed on the coach with a haemorrhaging ulcer, dying at Wiluna on 1 December 1905. Castle had been involved in Hall's affairs since his appointment as mine agent in Gwynfynydd for the British Gold Fields Company in 1894, having previously erected machinery there for Pritchard Morgan. Even prior to Gwalia Consols, Castle had held power of attorney in the Star of Gwalia, normally the prerogative only of partners or directors such as Hall, and he assumed sole power of attorney for Gwalia Consols in July 1902 during Hall's divorce case.⁷⁶ He was also still a significant shareholder in Sons of Gwalia, and held a personal stake in Gwalia Consols. Completely different in character to Hall, he was careful with his money, had invested wisely in mining stock, and even with the depressed values of his Gwalia shares, his death left his wife comfortably off; probate recorded that he left £5961.1s 5d.⁷⁷

Hall over the 1903-5 period seldom visited Wiluna, instead staying near the family in Adelaide to support them, and sorting out family affairs and finance after the divorce. Reported to have been involved in mining consultancy in South Australia, he had commented on Wallaroo Company's copper and superphosphate activities after a trip to the Yorke Peninsula.⁷⁸ However, Castle's death forced him to go up to Wiluna to appoint a new mine manager. Indeed, he had to take direct responsibility, resuming power of attorney for Gwalia Consols for a short while from December 1905 onwards until the new manager was in place.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 14 July 1905.

⁷⁶ State Record Office, Gwalia Consolidated, consignment 1370, file 111/98, power of attorney declaring Castle as substitute for Hall, 20 March 1902; letter, 14 July 1902, revoking George Hall's power of attorney, and declaration of Alexander Wilson Castle's power of attorney

⁷⁷ *Western Mail* (Perth), 17 February 1906.

⁷⁸ *Chronicle* (Adelaide), 11 October 1902, quoting an un-named Western Australian paper, probably while Hall was on his way to London.

⁷⁹ State Record Office, Gwalia Consolidated, consignment 1370, file 111/98, 20 January 1906. Letter to Perth, WA, Registrar of Companies, confirming Hall's resumption of powers of attorney.

One can understand what effect Castle's death had upon Hall's confidence and ability to cope. Hall depended on him absolutely; Castle had always been his 'rock' since Gwynfynydd, and throughout the Sons of Gwalia development period. It was he who had been the hard-headed manager working so efficiently and effectively in the background, while his more outgoing partner dealt with any public relations. Though Hall was such an effective public face, and a good negotiator and wheeler-dealer, he had not been so directly involved in the day to-day running of a gold mine, in Gwynfynydd, North Star, Sons of Gwalia or elsewhere; his strengths lay in geological assessment of the potential of leases, 'booming' the mines and raising the wherewithal to develop them.

Certainly at some stage after Castle's death, Hall's eldest surviving son, Frank, had accompanied him to Wiluna, and he apparently worked there as an engineer until 1909 when the mine largely closed down; he, with just a week's wages, was then forced to cycle all the way to Perth. However, he would have been still only 19 when Castle died, and would have had far too little experience to take any leading role in the mine. Several photocopies in the Battye Library collection assembled by Frank's daughter, Irma Wigley, are of photographs taken between 1908 and 1909 by Frank in the Wiluna area.⁸⁰

By 1906, newspaper cynicism about the Gwalia holdings had reached its fullest tide, and show that the previous high regard for Hall that journalists had formerly held had evaporated almost completely by this date. The ore in the mine, though extensive and relatively easily mined down to the 100 foot level produced a low return in telluride gold, and the lower levels of the mine were so heavily sulphided and complex that payable amounts of it could not be treated by any processes that were known at that time. Successive attempts by the series of managers and outside 'experts' proved as unsuccessful as they were expensive. The harsh judgement of the *Perth Sunday Times* in 1906 was not un-typical:

⁸⁰ Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/7, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988, photocopies marked by Frank Hall, and his daughter Irma F. Wigley as being photographs taken by, or obtained by, Frank Hall at Wiluna around 1908-9. These include identification of George W. Hall and Frank Hall in a photograph of the mineworkers and staff.

Gwalia Consols at Wiluna, which was always a low grade proposition, has got to the unpayable stage judging by February's result. The value of the ore has dwindled to 16s 1d per ton, and though costs are low, there was a loss of £220. Until his death, the mine was managed by the late A.W. Castle, the original manager of the Sons of Gwalia, and long associated with G.W. Hall in pegging out hundreds of leases in the northern fields, none of which came to anything. The present manager, W. F.(sic) Hall, has evidently got a very hard row to hoe, as there is not much hope of making a 4dwt. proposition pay in such a never-never district.⁸¹

Cornishman W. Treseder Hall, who was appointed to succeed Castle, took over in January 1906, but lasted less than a year before a breakdown in his own health. Percy Durant, who had come out with Hall from Gwynfynydd in 1895, and had since been working for Bewick, Moreing, was the next manager from December 1906.⁸² Despite his close association with Hall, he proved a very poor appointment, and produced little except expenditure on equipment, causing further debts to the company; he was less than a year in post. However, Durant's difficulty finding labour in such a distant location could not have helped, as in March 1907 he complained that he was 100 men short and could not find miners, even though paying £3.1s to £4.1s a week.⁸³

By June 1907, it still spoke volumes to Hall's stature in public life (rather than in mining matters) that he was appointed a JP in Wiluna.⁸⁴ Yet, he was no longer the subject of fawning interviews by the press, when they bothered to pay any attention to him. He was therefore driven to write his own version of events, a three-column letter on the 'history of the Gwalia Consolidated Company' published by the *West Australian Herald*.⁸⁵ He outlined the process by which the London and Westralian had sold the Sons of Gwalia and floated the 'Gwalia' mines south of the Sons of

⁸¹ *Sunday Times* (Perth), 1 April 1906.

⁸² State Record Office, Gwalia Consolidated, consignment 1370, file 111/98, deed of attorney, Gwalia Consolidated to Treseder Hall 8 December 1905; Treseder Hall to Percy Durant, 10 December 1906.

⁸³ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 5 March 1907.

⁸⁴ *West Australian*, 15 June 1907. He had been previously a J.P. in both Malcolm and Adelaide.

⁸⁵ Battye Library MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/1, papers of G. W Hall, 1855-1918, cutting labelled in Frank Hall's writing as *WA Herald*, 4 March 1907. This newspaper cannot be identified, however—possibly *Morning Herald* (Perth).

Gwalia, which were amalgamated to form the Gwalia Consolidated in 1899, (but failed to mention the loss on the nominal capital, the writing off of the majority of the second large issue of shares and the fact that so little of the working capital was left). He said that after these leases proved unpayable, the company had moved to Lake Violet (Wiluna) mine, which Hall himself had pegged, but had needed to close the mill there in early 1903 because of the difficulties in treating 75% of the sulphided ore without a cyanide plant.⁸⁶

Hall went on to state that a loan from the liquidated London and Westralian had financed erection of a cyanide plant and the mill had restarted in December 1904. Legal disputes over purchased Lake Way Goldfields machinery had prevented erection of a 20-stamp mill, and it was not until September 1906 that this was settled, and the machinery started to be erected. In the meantime the company's value had been written down significantly. Hall in his usual bullish mood then talked up the prospects of the 'immense' ore bodies on the site, until then mainly worked on an open cast basis down to 200 ft. He confirmed that the mines had:

...practically been self-supporting from the start, and profits from crushing have had to pay for nearly all the machinery erected. It has however, been starved in the past from want of capital and it is only about to be given a fair show. The mining men who have examined it—and they are but very few—have all expressed the opinion that they have never seen a mine in Western Australia to equal it in the immensity of its ore bodies.⁸⁷

Hall, therefore, at this time had a tremendous amount of his energies and money invested in these Wiluna mines. He had personally registered a large number of the leases, and his fortune and prospects were indissolubly tied to the Gwalia Consols Company, in which he and Pritchard Morgan held 10,000 shares each. Hall was certainly right, as he so often was, on the geological aspects of Wiluna; the mine eventually proved by the 1930s to be one of the largest low-grade ore mines in Western Australia. But at this earlier period, after initial success with oxidised ore down to the 100-foot level, it became increasingly difficult to free enough gold from the lower refractory ore, which was extremely tough and resistant to crushing, as well as producing slimes that clogged the filters and defied treatment. Though a variety of

⁸⁶ *ibid.*

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

cyanidisation processes were used after the initial dry crushing and roasting, this was extremely expensive; profitability and production costs were always to be the problem, and vast quantities of slimes, potentially rich, but untreatable at the time, had to be stockpiled in holding ponds.

After the Durant debacle, Hall once more took over the management in early December 1907, until Horace P. Robertson could arrive from Britain as manager.⁸⁸ Robertson's Gwalia company report to the next General Meeting sanguinely suggested that despite worker troubles which saw the company appeal (and win) a case with the Court of Arbitration over the reduction they had made in wages, good returns and a profitable future could be foreseen; though a company debit balance of £2500 remained.⁸⁹ Some progress was certainly made, with Robertson over his eighteen months' tenure returning the mine into a notional profit; however this was at considerable cost, with most of the profit being dissipated on outlay for more new cyanide plant and repair of crushing equipment. As a result Gwalia Consols had to negotiate with stockbrokers to increase capital, with another 200,000 shares issued. The next manager, a Mr E. King, appointed because of his 'special knowledge of cyanide treatment and his experience of complex ores' proved singularly unsuccessful in solving the extraction problems.⁹⁰

Such a lack of continuity in management and resultant lack of progress and profit caused journalists to renew their ire:

The fly in the Gwalia Consol's pot of ointment is, and has been ever since it was incorporated, the ineffable stupidity and the disorderly unproficiency of the galaxy of managers who have held the reins of government at different stages in its profitless career. Several were as ignorant as a mule of the rudiments of successful mine management.⁹¹

The same article referred to money being squandered on experimental projects, at the same time as money was also 'saved' by cutting corners, and exemplified the newly

⁸⁸ State Record Office, Gwalia Consolidated, consignment 1370, file 111/98 deeds of attorney, Percy Durant to George W. Hall, 11 December 1907; Gwalia Consolidated to Horace Patrick Robertson, 31 December 1907; *Sunday Times* (Perth) 17 November 1907.

⁸⁹ *The Times*, 28 February 1908; *Chronicle* (Adelaide), 6 January 1908.

⁹⁰ *The Times*, 16 November 1909.

⁹¹ *Sunday Times* (Perth), 24 January 1909.

installed Cassell's vacuum filter press as being typical of equipment whose cost of upkeep and renewal was forecast to exceed the value of the gold produced.

Once more this illustrates a recurrent theme of the thesis, that Hall, always so successful in Swansea and in Western Australia to use the press to boost his personal standing or gain investor support for his causes and his mines, was now, once disbelieved, being constantly undermined by negative treatment in the media. One can certainly parallel the situations of Whitaker Wright and Horatio Bottomley, both of whose investment empires depended as much on publicity as upon substance, and who, once one element of their house of cards was queried, found the whole edifice tumbling.⁹²

There was certainly plenty of gold in the Wiluna mine, if only it could be treated and recovered. In 1908, in fact, it produced over 4700 oz., and its lifetime production was almost 55,000 oz.⁹³ By June 1908, the Perth *Sunday Times*' 'Mines and Finance' section seemed almost schizophrenic about Gwalia Consols. Much of the comment was clearly based on tittle-tattle, but the paper's many different correspondents oscillated between strongly tipping the company's shares, and running down its past record. It recorded among its jottings that G.W. 'Gwalia' Hall was in Korea, developing a valuable concession for Pritchard Morgan, another snippet recommended purchase of Gwalia shares, and a third that Gwalia was making £1000 profit a month, with costs from cutting to milling of only 2s 6d a ton. A further paragraph predicted that such costs could be as low as 1s 6d a ton and that Wiluna would be second only to the Boulder mines in two to three years. Yet, in contrast, a fifth article in the same section of the paper traced the chequered history of Gwalia Consolidated from 1898 through the period in 1900-2 where the original 'Gwalia' leases, 'a prolific producer of wildcats' were abandoned and Wiluna was opened up. It chronicled the capitalisation expansion from the original £160,000 to £625,000, and

⁹² R.T Appleyard and Melville Davies, 'Financiers of Western Australia's Goldfields' in R.T. Appleyard, and C. B Schedvin (eds.) *Australian Financiers*, pp.164-175, provides an illuminating analysis of the publicity processes used by Bottomley, including financing his own newspaper, *John Bull*, Wright's manipulation of mine managers' reports, and the effect Wright's collapse had upon popular investment confidence.

⁹³ A. Montgomery, *Report on the Progress of Mining in the Districts between Leonora and Wiluna* (Perth: Fred Wm. Simpson, Government Printer, March 1909), pp.19-20, Department of Mines, Perth.

writing off the London and Westralian share holdings to reduce to a capital of £50,000 in 1902; commenting that £561,562 was ‘squandered on the abandoned salt bush estates’.⁹⁴

Yet by September 1908, the same newspaper’s tone, though initially negative, ended in cautious optimism. It referred to the failure of the Lake Way Goldfield (W.A.) Company and its absorption into Gwalia Consolidated, which, the paper said, ‘has produced a lot of gold, but always at a loss, and has continually increased its capital to keep going’. It suggested that at least £200,000 had been spent over the years, much of it from proceeds of gold production but that ‘the whole thing has been a fizzle’. However, it conceded that though inefficient managers had hampered development, the ore in the Lake Way leases was uniformly gold-bearing. The Lake Violet and Essex leases had been acquired from the London and Westralian in 1902 to work alongside the Lake Way property, and though the Essex had been abandoned, Lake Violet had proved promising. Though Company current debit amounted to £561,532, and the mine was currently showing a profit of less than £500 a month because of extraction difficulties, the correspondent suggested that ‘Wiluna is the “coming” mining centre’ and ‘under expert direction, the belt may be expected to add, some day, a very substantial quota to the gold yield of the West’.⁹⁵

However, probably the most scathing article of many such came from the same paper in January 1909, headlined ‘The Gwalia Consols, A Much-Messed Mine’. This first reminded readers that the name of the company derived from the original leases ‘pegged out by that energetic individual G. W. Hall’ near the Sons of Gwalia and noted that these abandoned leases were now the ‘backbone of the Sons of Gwalia mine’, which, it said, showed the irony of mining. It went on to state that the Wiluna property had been held for seven years with practically no work on it and no development below 100 ft. It quoted the vast numbers of engineers who had inspected it, asked why so many were needed to ‘puff’ a mine with a lode a chain wide on the surface, and concluded that:

⁹⁴ *Sunday Times* (Perth), 21 June 1908; Gwalia Directors’ report, Stock Exchange Company Annual Reports 1903, Col/Lib PB02/774, Guildhall Library, London.

⁹⁵ *Sunday Times* (Perth), 27 September 1908.

...financing of the co. from the first to the last has been rotten in the extreme. That may be due to the chairman S.W. Paddon who has been connected with nothing but failures—not due to inherent rottenness, but to rotten finance.⁹⁶

Paddon, who had been with Morgan in the London and Westralian from the start, was described as ‘either a Jonah or a Judas’ and the correspondent said that ‘tons of money’ had been spent uselessly on the property. It wondered why six managers in seven years had failed to make it pay, and said that though the company was now in a strong financial position, having written down its value to £20,600 and having £36,000 in hand, it had been ‘cursed with a lot of rotten managers’ and that Horace P. Robertson, on his past record promised no better.

Yet in contrast once more, the Western Australia Department of Mines report of March 1909 spoke most favourably of the Gwalia Consols lode, which it described as being a ‘huge ore-body of much the same type as the ...Hannans Reward at Kalgoorlie’. It stated that it was ‘of great width, being 50 to 100 ft wide’ and extending to at least 1750 feet. However, it also highlighted the problem that ‘until lately there has been much difficulty in securing a good percentage of extraction of the ore values’ and noted the large heap of old residues awaiting re-treatment. The charts in the report showed that the Gwalia Consolidated mine produced 43% of all the gold in the Wiluna field in the year to October 1908, and crushed more ore than all the other 30 mines together.⁹⁷

All the other outside ‘experts’ having failed, and with the mine having closed for a period in 1909, Bewick, Moreing now became involved in management of the company.⁹⁸ By early 1911, Hoover’s mentor, Edward Hooper, was chairman of Gwalia Consolidated following the resignation of Paddon.⁹⁹ W. J. Loring, who had made his name in turning around the Sons of Gwalia, stated that the plant necessary to treat the ore would cost from £100,000 to £150,000. By November 1912, the mine had been closed down for most of the previous year, the modified roasting process being used on the ore having proven unsuccessful, and losses had risen to over

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10 January 1909.

⁹⁷ A. Montgomery, *Report on the Progress of Mining in the Districts between Leonora and Wiluna*.

⁹⁸ *West Australian*, 16 February 1911.

⁹⁹ *The Times*, 10 February 1911.

£15,000.¹⁰⁰ A further disastrous attempt by the latest manager, Ben Howe, saw him claim to be able to volatilise gold from the sulphide ore, which he did successfully, but then failed to precipitate the metal from its gaseous state; an expenditure quoted variously as £30,000 and £17,000 resulted in 2 ounces of gold, worth £39, being recovered.¹⁰¹ This was the final blow and the mine was closed, Gwalia Consols shareholders voting to go into liquidation in 1913.¹⁰²

Subsequently between 1914 and 1924 an entrepreneur who became famous in Western Australian gold-mining history was to acquire the leases.¹⁰³ This was Claude de Bernales, in the name of his Western Machinery Company Ltd., to extend the syndicate at Wiluna that he and Arthur Morgans had floated in 1908/09.¹⁰⁴ Though it eventually took until 1926, the previously intractable arsenopyritic ore proved amenable to the oil flotation technology that he had backed financially in 1922. A successful launch of the Wiluna Gold Corporation, aided by the advent of a railway from Meekatharra in 1929, saw the Wiluna Gold Mines produce £3.5 million of gold between 1925 and 1930.¹⁰⁵ With the finance and technology that Gwalia Consols had lacked, Wiluna eventually more than bore out Hall's faith in these mines.

By 1908, Hall, however, had had enough. The *Kalgoorlie Miner* in April 1908 showed an uncharacteristically sympathetic attitude towards him, in an interview as he travelled through Perth. He was on his way to take up a position for Pritchard Morgan in Korea, where he had also been working the previous year.

In the history of the outback mining fields, few names are more prominent than that of Mr G.W.Hall and to that gentleman's enterprise the State owes many of the flourishing mines which today help to swell the gold yield of that State. Mr Hall is one of the few who have stuck, through good and bad times,

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 26 November 1912.

¹⁰¹ *Geraldton Guardian and Express*, 6 January 1930.

¹⁰² *The Times*, 12 September 1912; *Western Mail* (Perth), 30 May 1935.

¹⁰³ *The Daily News* (Perth), 1 November 1923.

¹⁰⁴ R.T Appleyard and Melville Davies, 'Financiers of Western Australia's Goldfields' in R.T. Appleyard, and C. B Schedvin (eds.), *Australian Financiers*, pp.179-180.

¹⁰⁵ Melville Davies, 'Claude Albo de Bernales - Wizard of Australia's Golden West' in Raymond E. Dummett (ed.) *Mining Tycoons in the Age of Empire*, pp.184-6; *Western Mail* (Perth), 30 May 1935; *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 6 May 1932, states that De Bernales first visited Wiluna a quarter of a century previously '...when Mr Castles was guiding the destinies of the Lake Violet Consols', so this must have been before 1905 when Castle died.

to the Lake Way district, and have demonstrated the soundness of their judgement by bringing the field into the range of gold producers.¹⁰⁶

Hall recounted how he became convinced of the goldfield's value and had 'stuck to it ever since', saying that the Lake Way district represented 'some of the most extraordinary secretions of gold I have so far found in the whole world but at the same time they are the most consistent', extending between 5 feet and 240 feet. In typical Hall 'boomster' fashion, he suggested the possibility that Wiluna would prove 'another Bendigo'. Hall also stated that he had now retired from Gwalia Consolidated and having been appointed manager of the Korean Imperial Concessions, 'about 58 miles of country in Korea abounding in gold, silver, copper, lead and coal', he would shortly be leaving for that country.

His departure from Wiluna, though he left his son Frank working there until 1909, effectively marked the end of Hall's decade and more of commitment to the north-eastern goldfields of Western Australia. He had been acknowledged throughout this period as the prime mover and pioneer of gold-mining of the area between Laverton, Malcolm, Leonora and Wiluna. Certainly one can interpret that major motivating factors were his desire for public status, and a desire to be liked and popular which shone through his utterances in the press over that period. His sociability, conviviality and fluency of his storytelling had made him a firm favourite with the press and public in the early days. But that very openness and eternal optimism had by the end resulted in his being disbelieved by those same journalists who had previously hung on his words.

Even so, there was still no end to Hall's transnational involvement, this time in the Far East. As early as 1903, Hall had been well aware of Pritchard Morgan's Asian affairs. On his return to Australia after his lengthy absence in Britain, he had quoted British capitalists' discontent with high wages and costs in the gold-fields, and compared the Australian situation with that in Korea. 'People are putting their capital now into mining in America, in Corea [as it was then written] and in other places where labour can readily be obtained at low rates', and quoted a Korean rate of 7d to

¹⁰⁶ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 10 April 1908.

1s 3d a day compared with Western Australia's £4.10s a week.¹⁰⁷ Morgan's entrepreneurial interests from now on were mainly in China and Korea, as both countries opened up to present opportunities for Western investors. The Chinese Empire's intention was to modernise their industry, and to regain face following their disastrous war against Japan in 1894-5. Concessions gained by a German intervention in Shantung province resulted in other Western nations scrambling for similar rewards, and the main areas under consideration were railways and mines. The declaration of a Korean Empire in 1897, as it broke away from Chinese suzerainty following the Sino-Japanese War, saw that country become the cockpit for power struggles between Russia and Japan. There were concessionary opportunities particularly for alert French, German, USA and British entrepreneurs, of whom Pritchard Morgan was one.¹⁰⁸

As has been emphasised several times previously in this thesis, we once more have to depend on knowledge about Pritchard Morgan to understand anything of Hall's activities. In the case of Hall's work in China and Korea, we need to examine Morgan's involvement with the British and Korean Corporation and the Eastern Pioneer Company, as there is no documented evidence of Hall's working presence in those countries. Indeed, there is not even a reference to him as a shareholder in the documentation of either of Morgan's two companies. However, there can be no doubt that he did go to Korea in 1907, and again between April and June 1908 and that this was under the auspices of Pritchard Morgan. Despite his claim in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* to have been appointed manager of the Korean Imperial Concessions there is no other evidence of this, but it can be confidently asserted that he would have gone to the Unsan region, north-east of Pyongyang, where the Gwendoline mine, owned by Pritchard Morgan's British and Korean Corporation, was situated.

As far back as 1896, Pritchard Morgan had pursued his interest in China; indeed, he had gone there directly from his Western Australia visit in 1895, when Hall had to evaluate his 120 lease options. From 1896 to 1898 Morgan had been involved in attempting to raise a £9 million loan to fund the Peking-Hankow railway, and

¹⁰⁷ *Western Mail* (Perth), 28 Nov 1903.

¹⁰⁸ Michael J. Seth, *A History of Korea from Antiquity to the Present* (Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield, 2011) pp.234-257, for fuller discussion of these issues.

attempting unsuccessfully to get the British Government to secure a further £16million loan for war reparations. As a result of his efforts he claimed that His Excellency Viceroy Li Hung Chang, Imperial Commissioner of Mines for Szechuan, had invited him to explore cooperation to develop mining interests.¹⁰⁹ He reached agreement on 30 January 1899, ratified by Imperial decree on 14 April, for his Eastern Pioneer Company to acquire a valuable concession in Szechuan, to explore mineral opportunities in conjunction with the Hui Tung Company (Chinese officials always insisted that any foreign company had to co-operate with a company domiciled in China). To prevent accusations of monopoly this agreement also included the Yangtze Valley Company and a French syndicate, Syndicat de Yunnan.¹¹⁰

Despite his later persistent claims, Morgan seems to have done little with the Chinese concession—in 1906, China's Minister for Mines, Prince Ch'ing, claimed that Morgan's party had merely been travelling through the country and carried out no work on the lease; therefore under Article 14 of the agreement the Chinese deemed it had lapsed after six months. However Morgan's assertion was that within a month after the concession agreement was signed in 1899, a first expedition under J.V Burn-Murdoch had explored the concession and worked on it, followed by a second expedition under Dr. R Logan Jack, the representative of the Eastern Pioneer Company and Mr Hay of the Yangtze Valley Company. This is borne out by Jack's book about the journey.¹¹¹ He said that his party had worked the Maha gold mine from February 1900, but had been forced to withdraw their expedition because of Chinese government instruction of 10 August that all British nationals had to leave the country as a result of the unrest caused by the Boxer rebellion.¹¹² In 1902 the Chinese government had attempted to substitute a less valuable agreement, the Ningyuan agreement, for that held by Morgan, but though this was signed on 11

¹⁰⁹ *The Belfast News-Letter*, 7 February 1899; *New York Times*, 2 February 1899. The latter also refers to his Korean concessions.

¹¹⁰ National Archive record, Foreign Office (FO) files, FO 228/2486, D1, Foreign Office summary of events and correspondence, Pritchard Morgan letter 31 January 1906, together with the companies' memorandum of agreement; Ian Phimister, 'Foreign Devils, Finance and Informal Empire: Britain and China c.1900–1912', *Modern Asian Studies* 40:3 (2006), pp.737–739.

¹¹¹ Robert Logan Jack, *The Back Blocks of China: A Narrative of Experiences among the Chinese, Sifans, Lolos, Tibetans, Shans and Kachins between Shanghai and the Irrawadi* (Edward Arnold, London 1904), pp.100–104. Though Jack had certainly been exploring other mines en route, he did not in fact arrive at the Maha gold mine until 13 July 1900, and was therefore on site for less than a month before being forced to leave on 10 August.

¹¹² National Archive record, FO Files, FO 228/2487, D4, handwritten letter by Pritchard Morgan to Sir John Jordan, February, 1908.

February 1903, it was not ratified by Morgan's company, and further procrastination ensued.¹¹³ This was followed by the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5, during which Morgan claimed it was impossible to work.

After hearing in 1906 that the Chinese Government had repudiated the original 1899 agreement, Morgan brought out another party to Peking [Beijing] in February 1908 to show evidence and argue his case, afterwards complaining that British diplomats in China had been unwilling to aid him.¹¹⁴ The Chinese Government held firm, maintaining he had not done any work on the mining sites and that therefore, under Article 14, the agreement had lapsed after six months. He pressed his claim frequently and at inordinate length through the Foreign Office over the coming years. He presented documentary evidence of confirmation by His Excellency Li Hung Chang, the deceased Imperial Commissioner for Mines that the work had been carried out, together with detail of activities and costs. He then changed his tack, pressing instead for compensation for all that he had spent, and pursued this claim, which varied in total to several millions, but was eventually reduced to £220,500, over the period 1908-1914. Voluminous Foreign Office letterbook correspondence shows the personal involvement of Edward Grey, the British Foreign Minister, together with a number of Liberal MPs who raised questions in Parliament, and the frequent mediation of Sir John Jordan, London's 'man on the spot', who was HM Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary to China from 1906 onwards, and was well known to Morgan through Jordan's earlier Korean activities.¹¹⁵

By 1911, Morgan was the subject of litigation by his own shareholders, enraged by lack of success in pursuing the company's only remaining asset, namely this compensation for the Szechuan agreement. By January 1913, his situation was even worse and he was close to bankruptcy. He made a heart-rending personal plea to the long-suffering Jordan to intervene. He said:

¹¹³ FO 881/9301, précis of the Pritchard Morgan case and correspondence, together with copy of the Ningyuan agreement as Annex 1.

¹¹⁴ FO 228/2487, letter, Pritchard Morgan to Rt. Hon. Edward Grey, Foreign Minister, 10 September 1908.

¹¹⁵ National Archive record, FO 228/2486, Letterbook 1906-07, letter, Sir John Jordan to Prince Ch'ing, 2 March, 1907; National Archive record FO 228/2489; letter, Sir John Jordan to Pritchard Morgan, 25 January 1913, for example.

To keep the Chinese business alive I have had to mortgage everything I have in this world and when I tell you that I have for the past two or three months, been reduced not only to borrowing from the Jews at enormous interest, but even to parting with my wife's trinkets, you can imagine the fearful straits to which I have been subjected.¹¹⁶

The incoming Chinese republican government, wishing to dispose of outstanding claims, made a final offer of £10,000, a fraction of what Morgan had claimed. Even in 1914, Morgan was still seeking vainly to trade off restitution for the previous concession to set up a British consortium, which would negotiate for petroleum rights for the Red Plain in Szechuan, together with water rights from the Yangtze and rights to build all Szechuan railways. All this, he suggested, would be on the same basis as the existing Chinese agreement with the Standard Oil Company.¹¹⁷

In 1898, Pritchard Morgan had also been appointed Her Majesty's Consul General to Korea, and apparently visited that country.¹¹⁸ Morgan's Eastern Pioneer Company subsequently sold its stock relating to the concession gained from the Korean Emperor on that visit to the newly formed and larger British and Korean Corporation in 1901, in a deal that was lucrative to the Eastern Pioneer and Pritchard Morgan, both financially and in terms of retention of £80,000 worth of shares.¹¹⁹ Work on the concession had already commenced in January 1900.¹²⁰ Though the Korean king, Ko Jong, had assumed the title of Emperor of Korea in 1897, in truth the political situation over the entire period during which the Gwendoline mine was worked was in turmoil. There were disputes over suzerainty in Korea between China and Japan, the Russo-Japanese war threatened the region, and there was increasingly direct Japanese control of Korean affairs, despite an independence movement and the Korean Choson dynasty's attempts to retain or regain control, culminating in Japanese annexation in the 1907-9 period.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Foreign Office papers, FO 228/2489, Pritchard Morgan to Sir John Jordan, 3 January 1913.

¹¹⁷ Foreign Office papers, FO 228/2489, Pritchard Morgan to Foreign Office, 5 May, 1914 and subsequent letters.

¹¹⁸ *The London Gazette*, 24 July 1900.

¹¹⁹ Stock Exchange Annual Reports, Box 771-2, Guildhall Library, London.

¹²⁰ National Archive record BT31/9319/69261, sale agreement dated 28 January 1901; John Scott-Keltie, *The Statesman's Year Book* (London: Macmillan, 1901) pp.827.

¹²¹ Jingwung Kim, *A History of Korea, from 'Land of the Morning Calm' to States in Conflict* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012) pp.303-320 and Michael J. Seth, *A History of Korea from Antiquity to the Present* (Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield, 2011) pp.234-257.

Hall and Morgan at this time were caught up in the increasing internationalisation of mining and manufacturing ventures in China and Korea. The British and Korean Corporation was typical of the mining companies based in London, but with support from numerous other countries. For instance it had attracted considerable international backing to develop the Gwendoline mine, which had been named after one of Morgan's relations. Other major shareholders included the Yangtze Corporation and Morgan's Eastern Pioneer Company, together with substantial holdings by bankers and companies in Brussels and Antwerp. By 1903, both the Gwendoline and the nearby Telegraph mine were in full production.¹²² A similar concession granted to Americans at Unsan in 1895 and worked by the Oriental Consolidated Mining Company proved extremely prolific in output until 1939.¹²³ During the Russo-Japanese war in 1904 Japanese troops were guarding the Gwendoline mine and safeguarding the transport of bullion from it.¹²⁴ However, the British mine proved far less long-lasting than its American neighbours. Initially it was extremely lucrative, but the gold-bearing lode soon pinched out and the lavish spending by the company on the buildings and infrastructure proved unsustainable. The manager's house, completed even before production commenced, was extensive. This expenditure together with brick-built miners' quarters, soon nibbled away at the profits generated. In December 1907 the shareholders' meeting decided to go into liquidation, and by 1909, the whole British and Korean Corporation, in which Pritchard Morgan personally was by far the greatest shareholder, had being wound up with nil assets, £12,000 unpaid debentures and creditors owed £3117.¹²⁵ Only the Eastern Pioneer Company remained for Morgan, a very small company, which apart from its long-running attempts to claim compensation for the lapsed Szechuan concession had no other major holdings.

Deducing from the sparse information in the Australian newspaper reports, Morgan's intention may well have been to send Hall to the Gwendoline mine in 1907

¹²² National Archive record, BT31/9319/69261; shareholders' list, and Stock Exchange reports, Box 771-2, Guildhall Library, London.

¹²³ Spencer J Palmer, 'American Mining in Korea's Unsan District', *Pacific Historical Review*, vol.31, no.4, University of California Press (November 1962); Robert Neff, Nodaji: *Western Gold Miners in Korea 2007* - www.raskb.com/transactions/VOL81/VOL81-4.docx . accessed on internet 26/11/13.

¹²⁴ *Morning Oregonian* (Portland, Or.), April 08 1904.

¹²⁵ National Archive record, BT31/9319/69261, liquidators' reports; Walter R. Skinner, *Mining Manual and Year Book 1903, 1909*, London (Guildhall Library, London).

and 1908 as a trouble-shooter. Bearing in mind that the goldmine, which the original Eastern Pioneer shareholders had previously heard was producing over 2 oz to the ton, was already well on their way into liquidation, his two visits were far too late. Whatever economies could have been effected in the extremely primitive production methods found in the Korean mining industry, nothing could produce more gold in Gwendoline after the lode disappeared, and the decision to liquidate had been made even before Hall returned as a 'manager' in 1908. We know definitely that he went there, twice; but with no evidence, we can only speculate on what he did there.

Hall was also credited in several of his obituaries as having holdings in China and having suffered significant personal losses there; one even refers to extensive travel through Japan. His obituary, as published in the *Herald of Wales* stated, without any further details, that the Chinese Government had appointed him consulting engineer, but that he had suffered 'heavy reverses in fortune'; however this Chinese post could well have been a feature of Pritchard Morgan's vivid imagination.¹²⁶ Hall certainly did not stay in either country for long; he had only sailed from Perth for Korea in April 1908, but by December 1908 was back in Wales, in Swansea. In that city he was reported as having lectured with considerable acclaim from his audience on a somewhat abstruse subject, Chinese burial customs, drawing on what he had learnt while in China. Therefore, either during the previous year, or during that short period in 1908, he had visited that country as well as Korea, and had applied himself as assiduously as in his Swansea days to learning about it.¹²⁷ Even after Hall's decease, his erstwhile neighbour in London, Ernest Powers, wrote to his son Herbert Edwin (Bert), and in commiserating with him asked what had happened to Hall's 'Chinese interests', that Powers said he had been discussing with him in the period before his death.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ *Herald of Wales*, 23 January 1915.

¹²⁷ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 1 December 1908. 'Packed ... into the committee room of the Swansea Free Public Library... to listen to a lecture of entrancing interest, and upon no less a subject than "Experiences and Impressions of the Far East" with beautiful lantern illustrations by Mr George W. Hall, a one-time member of the *Cambria Daily Leader* literary staff perhaps better known to a wide circle of readers as "Rambler" '.

¹²⁸ Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/5, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988, transcript of letter, undated, by F. Ernest Powers, a former neighbour of Hall in Kestrel Avenue London, to Hall's son Herbert Edwin (Bert) Hall.

In 1910-11, Pritchard Morgan attempted to reopen Gwynfynydd mine, where the Gwyn Mines (Merioneth) Co. had been running at a cumulative loss of over £20,000 since 1901.¹²⁹ First he took a tributary lease on the property and then, when the receiver sold it in 1914, purchased the assets for £600. By the 1911 census, Hall was also involved in Gwynfynydd once more; he was resident at the Ty'n-y-Groes hotel in Ganllwyd, three miles from the mine, and described himself as 'widower', (which, though divorced, he certainly was not; his wife was living in Melbourne by then).¹³⁰ Lodging there also was a young mining draughtsman, Ferdinand Richards from Merthyr Tydfil; clearly this was connected to Morgan's attempt to reopen the mine. One can surmise that his long friendship with Hall meant that he had felt impelled once more to find him a role within his greatly reduced mining activities, which included the small Prince Edward mine six miles north of Gwynfynydd. One obituary also stated that Hall had been Morgan's agent in the latter's abortive 1910 attempt to regain his Merthyr seat, but this has not been verified; if he was, he was less than effective, as Morgan, despite a vicious campaign accusing Hardie and the Labour party of 'atheism, assassination and advocacy of free love' was last in the poll this time.¹³¹

It is apparent that even as late as 1913, George Hall still maintained his transnational activities. Far from being confined to Wales and the development of Gwynfynydd, he made at least one further visit to Australia. After Hall's death, a letter to the *Adelaide Advertiser* by a Mr Pawson, quoted in full another letter he had received from Hall in January 1913 addressed from his home in the Avenue, Medindie, commenting on samples that he had assayed for Pawson from claims in the hills near Adelaide.¹³² Hall had been typically enthusiastic and positive about the quality of Pawson's assays, and he also stated that he would be 'leaving for the West' (Western Australia, certainly) within the next few weeks.

¹²⁹ *Y Brython Cymreig*, 22 December 1910.

¹³⁰ Census Return 1911, Ty'n-y-Groes Hotel, Dolgelley[Dolgellau].

¹³¹ W. Richard Morgan, *Political History in the 19th-20th Century*, p.245; *Aberdare Leader*, 23 January 1915; see also William Stewart, *J. Keir Hardie: A Biography* (London: Cassell, 1921) p.291, for comment on Morgan's campaign 'of scurrilous abuse and misrepresentation'.

¹³² *Adelaide Advertiser*, 2 April 1915. However it should be noted that the house in the Avenue had been sold in 1904.

Once more back in Wales, he had at some point in this period moved into the mine manager's bungalow at Gwynfynydd. It was on his way home to this location on the evening of Monday 18 January 1915, after having dined in Dolgellau with Pritchard Morgan, that he called about 9.00 p.m. on friends at the Tyddyn Gwladys mine manager's home. Afterwards, on the rocky path near his bungalow by Pistyll Cain, between Tyddyn Gwladys and Gwynfynydd, he lost his footing and fell 45 feet, smashing his skull on a rock in the bed of the river Mawddach.

Obituaries in newspapers as varied as the *South Wales Echo* and the *Adelaide Advertiser* show how much he had dropped out of the public eye; over the previous decade, little new material about him had been added and the majority of the obituaries were recycled information.¹³³ Much of this information had been taken directly from his own (overstated and somewhat inaccurate) 1901 election biographical details, together with sketchy references to his China ventures and travelling 'extensively in Korea and Japan'. Several referred to his 'genial, kindly and generous disposition' and said he was 'highly esteemed by all who were brought in touch with him'.¹³⁴

The inquest report of the event confirmed the facts of his decease. In the inquest on 20th January at Gwynfynydd Cottages, before the deputy Coroner, Rowland Guthrie Jones, witness Henry James of Tyddyn Gwladys Cottages, Ganllwyd, manager of the Gwyngod [writing undecipherable] mine stated:

I identify the body viewed [...] as that of George William Hall. He was above 65 years of age [though he was actually only 59] and was manager of the Prince Edward Gold Mine, Trawsfynydd.¹³⁵ I last saw him alive about 10.30 p.m. Monday 18th January, when he left my house for his rooms. He had been to Dolgelley and called at about 9.00 p.m. He had no light when he left me though I offered him one. He said he was quite well used to the road. It was very dark. Mr and Mrs Robert Jones, Post Office, Ganllwyd, were in my house with him. The deceased was sober when he left my house. The body was found half a mile from my house.

¹³³ *South Wales Echo*, 20 January 1915; *Adelaide Advertiser*, 31 March 1915; *Financial Times*, 21 January 1915; *West Australian*, 27 February 1915.

¹³⁴ *Adelaide Advertiser*, 31 March 1915.

¹³⁵ This small mine is six miles further north than Gwynfynydd and was worked intermittently around this period. Its best output years were 1911-12. <http://www.mindat.org/loc-5285.html>, accessed 8 December 2014.

The doctor who examined him, John Jones, said that he had arrived at Gwynfynydd about 3.00 p.m on the following day. He reported that ‘ Nobody was at the spot where the deceased had fallen over. I examined him and found severe injuries to the head. His death must have been instantaneous. He probably struck a rock before entering the water and would then have been killed instantaneously’. Constable John Barnard stated that:

The deceased left Tyddyn Gwladys Cottages around 11.00 pm to go home to Gwynfynydd mine about a mile away. There was nothing unusual in his manner. Deceased was not seen alive again. Mrs Dews found deceased lying dead on the rocks in the river. Deceased had [fallen -omitted] down the embankment his head was in a pulp.

The form which accompanied the statement described him as 'assistant mine manager', presumably of the Gwynfynydd mine.¹³⁶

It is perhaps typical that the ambiguities that surrounded Hall's life also permeated his decease. Some of the reports, in Welsh newspapers, particularly Cardiff's *Western Mail*, were inaccurate even in recounting the events leading up to, and causes of, his death—he was reported severally to have been killed in a motor accident, or a boulder to have fallen on him—and these in turn were re-quoted in Australian newspapers. Even the *Cambria Daily Leader* quoted as a ‘scoop’ Pritchard Morgan's inaccurate telegram to them that he had drowned.¹³⁷ Several speculated that he was still very well off, though stating that he had lost a good deal of money on the China ventures. Family members in Australia always thought there was something suspicious about his death, as he was apparently found with no money on him, whereas the family knew that it was always his habit to carry a considerable sum, and the sapphire and diamond tie-pin that he always wore was never traced. However, the coroner was clearly satisfied that nothing was amiss. Pritchard Morgan was not referred to in the inquest; however, in his subsequent letter to Herbert Edwin, George Hall's son, he states that he had motored from the mine to Dolgelley [Dolgellau] with Hall, and had been with him until 6.30 p.m. when Hall had left by pony and trap to return to his lodgings.

¹³⁶ Coroner's report, 20 January 1915, Archifdy Dolgellau, Gwynedd County Archives.

¹³⁷ *Cambria Daily Leader*, 20 January 1915.

What was ironic was that the death of a man who had only 15 years previously been feted in the newspapers of Australia, London, Swansea and Cardiff, was reported only in passing in a local weekly paper, *Y Dydd (Dolgellau)* though its issue immediately after Hall's decease carried substantial death notices for a number of local people, and even reported at length a local accident whose only consequence was a leg injury.¹³⁸ He was not even mentioned in *Y Rhedegydd* in nearby Trawsfynydd. Certainly also, the momentous events of the First World War would have meant that his death would have attracted less attention at this time in London and Australian media, in comparison with more compelling events on the world stage.

In Chapter 3 it was stated that Pritchard Morgan and Hall throughout their working relationship were kindred souls. Their bond is symbolized powerfully by the fact that even on the last day of his life, Hall and Morgan had dined together in Dolgellau, before he set out for his Gwynfynydd bungalow. Yet in the final act, Morgan deserted his friend. Though he attended Hall's funeral in Llanelltyd, he did nothing subsequently for Hall's family. Pritchard Morgan denied in a letter to Herbert Edwin, George Hall's eldest son, that his father had any financial interest in his China ventures.¹³⁹ Morgan did not even erect a headstone for Hall; the family, who all remained in Australia, were horrified to learn that their father had been buried in an unmarked grave. Hall's burial is recorded on 23rd January 1915 in the BMD for Llanelltyd churchyard, but the grave location is forgotten.¹⁴⁰

Thus ended the career a man who blazed a trail across the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia, and who opened up their Northern parts. Hall's achievements and significance in both Wales and Australia deserves better than to be regarded as a footnote to Western Australian history, and also deserves greater recognition in the historiography of entrepreneurialism and the development of newspapers in Wales.

¹³⁸ *Y Dydd*, 22 January 1915, '*Damwain Anceuol i Cadben gwaith Mwynawl Cymreig*' ['Fatal accident to the captain of a Welsh mining works'].

¹³⁹ Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/5, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988, transcript of letter by W. Pritchard Morgan to Bert Hall, 23 September 1915, copied by Irma F. Wigley, from the papers of her cousin, Murray Maxwell Hall.

¹⁴⁰ List of entries in the Llanelltyd Parish Registers of Burial with no memorial, Gwynedd Family History Society.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined the life and career of George W. Hall and sought to locate his activities, character and beliefs within several contexts. The most important of these are the networks of political and financial involvement in gold-mining that encompassed the London stock exchange, the British and Australian media, and Western Australian legislative and goldfields interests at the cusp of the 19th and 20th centuries. Hall's activities as an entrepreneur and speculator illustrate also how such networks were expanding internationally with the growth of trade in the British Empire, and the revolution in communications brought about by the telegraph. They also reflect British activities, among those of the other colonial powers, in southern Asia. Within this framework, the thesis suggests that Hall should be regarded as a significant transnational figure in Western Australian and Welsh mining history. Throughout the past 100 years, George Hall's importance and contribution to Western Australia and to Wales have been largely overlooked. In Australia, Hall has been particularly neglected; at best, since about 1925 he has been relegated to the position of a mere appendage to the history of the Sons of Gwalia mine. There is limited awareness among historians of his pioneering role in opening up a vast region of the desolate northern parts of the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia, as discussed in chapters 4 to 6, and they have also ignored his influence in Western Australian society and politics at this period. This thesis has argued extensively that though his role in mining and in the financial world of London was relatively brief, his meteoric rise and extensive media exposure, particularly in the 1896 to 1902 period in both the United Kingdom and Australia, deserve to be acknowledged. As an entrepreneur and transnational figure, he contributes a significantly different interpretation to our knowledge of the Welsh in British colonial investment and mining exploration of Western Australia, especially compared with previous studies in Australia that have concentrated more upon working men's roles, and the communities that they established.

Hall's work as a journalist in Wales complements his transnational significance, bridging as it did the press in Wales, London and Western Australia. His contribution to Welsh journalistic and political history in the decade to 1890 in

particular deserves greater recognition. This thesis has highlighted the key role that the *Cambria Daily Leader* and Hall played in ensuring the election of W. Pritchard Morgan in Merthyr when the majority of Welsh press outlets were antagonistic to him. Furthermore his press role extends beyond his work in Swansea; over the decade from 1895-1905, he was quoted regularly and in detail across the press of Western Australia, and Britain. This was a man who for a brief few years in both British and Western Australian mining circles was regarded as a major public figure and a star of the print media. It is significant that Hall's major commitments to the Sons of Gwalia and Gwalia Consols resulted in two Western Australian mines that were major contributors to gold production in Western Australia, and it is ironic that one of them made his fortune, while the second was a major factor in dissipating it. In many respects, his exposure was similar to that of entrepreneurial media figures such as Clive Sinclair in the 1970s and Richard Branson today, whose success in gaining financial backing closely relates to the amount of publicity engendered.

This thesis has explored Hall's political and social views. He was, like Merthyr MP, D. A. Thomas, a representative of the managerial and entrepreneurial classes, yet paradoxically was one who delighted in casting himself as the friend of the working man and one who prided himself on operating in their interests. He was described in the introduction to this thesis as a benevolent capitalist, embracing Lib-Lab political views, views whose day in Wales was already passing. He took his political principles and views on relationships with workers and their community with him to Western Australia and they remained his stance throughout his time there. It was to his disadvantage that the political and social world of that state moved on also, so that by the end of his time in Wiluna he found himself at odds with the very workers that he had championed.¹

As well as demonstrating how Hall's life and career was shaped by, illustrated and contributed to international gold-mining and the press in Wales, London and Australia, the thesis has sought to analyse the man himself, his ambiguities and complexity. In Chapter 1, the thesis suggests that his desire to identify himself with people and places may well have been caused by his loss at a young age of mother

¹ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus* 24 October 1905; *Chronicle* (Adelaide), 6 January 1907; *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 26 March 1907 (Report of the Chamber of Mines on industrial disputes).

and grandmother, the remarriage of his grandfather and his subsequent displacement from Bredwardine, and displacement to an absentee father in Aberdare. His attachment to Swansea and then to the north-eastern goldfields of Western Australia highlights his sense of shifting identities, and the importance to him and his nature of identification with specific places such as Malcolm and Wiluna.

Certainly throughout most of his life he enjoyed public acclaim and was well-liked and popular; as he left Swansea, the mayor and chair of school board among others testified to his kindness and unfailing good nature, and this is echoed throughout, even in those periods when the press was generally critical of his activities.² He was acknowledged also during his lifetime as a plain speaker, an honest man whose word could be relied upon, and a generous and well-respected public figure. He was without doubt also a brilliant public orator who could hold audiences of investors spellbound. Yet he was also an expert ‘boomster’ whose skilful use of the media contributed to manipulation of the mining markets, in the very way that he himself so frequently castigated.³ He was not alone in this. Mine managers’ and company reports time after time at this period attributed better performance and results to Western Australian mines than they merited; these were certainly contributory factors in the fall of speculators such as Whitaker Wright.⁴ It is noteworthy that even the lauded Claude de Bernales’ early attempts to float a Mining and Mercantile Bank came to naught, and his Wiluna Syndicate with Alfred Morgans was eventually unsuccessful. Only after 1926 did de Bernales succeed in attracting the necessary finance and even after his successful years he was investigated on suspicion of fraud and conspiracy.⁵ Nevertheless, there is no suggestion at any stage that Hall set out to defraud; no one ever doubted that he genuinely believed in the

² *Cambria Daily Leader*, 7 April 1890.

³ *West Australian* (Perth), 23 October 1923. ‘Hall was a breezy optimist and the gold mining industry of the state lost a great advertiser when he left’.

⁴ Jeremy Mouat, ‘Whitaker Wright, Speculative Finance, and the London Mining Boom of the 1890s’ in Raymond E. Dummett (ed.), *Mining Tycoons in the Age of Empire*, for a full treatment of Whitaker Wright; see also Hubert A. Meredith, *The Drama of Moneymaking: Tragedy and Comedy on the London Stock Exchange* [London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co, 1931].

⁵ Melville Davies, ‘Claude Albo de Bernales - Wizard of Australia’s Golden West’ in Raymond E. Dummett (ed.) *Mining Tycoons in the Age of Empire*, pp.180-188.

mines he represented.⁶ His unfailing optimism was his strength, and his major weakness.

Hall's benevolence and generosity often over-extended to extravagance and recklessness both in investment and private life, and were also to count against him at key periods, and it can be argued that he himself contributed significantly to his downfall. A born politician, with all the requisites of public image and ability to persuade, coupled with a genuine sense of personal obligation and civic and social duty, yet he failed narrowly on the only occasion that he stood for the Legislature. He was also unlucky at key periods in both his private and public life, as he was in the mining investment company that he had chosen to join, and the partner, Pritchard Morgan, to whom he allied himself. A warm, vital, enthusiastic and intelligent man, he undoubtedly suffered from lack of the ruthlessness that characterised successful mining entrepreneurs around him such as Alfred Morgans and Hoover, and the other American trained mining engineers whose 'industrialisation' of gold-mining transformed the process of gold extraction through emphasis upon driving down production costs.⁷

Irma Wigley recalls her father, Frank, talking about cycling all the way back to Perth from Gwalia Consols, Wiluna, after work slowed on that mine in 1909, and 'ironically learning from the various centres en route of the high esteem in which his father had been held and the high number of investments and gifts which he had bestowed for the development of the mines and the welfare of the people'.⁸ As Alexander Castle's grand-daughter Deborah Watkins said of her own grandfather and Hall, 'Both our grandfathers were able, honourable men of professional integrity and ideals'.⁹ Hall she also describes as 'in many ways a tragic man'.

⁶ Peter Robertson, *A Guide to Criminal Law* (Bradford: Emerald Publishing Co. 2nd edn. 2010), p75. Quoting the 'London and Globe Corporation' case 1903, the definition of 'deception' is 'to induce a man to believe that a thing is true which is false and which the person practicing the deceit knows to be false'

⁷ Jeremy Mouat, ' "Just Now the 'Merican expert is the Prominent Man": American mining engineers and the Australian mining industry 1880s-1910s', pp.136-149.

⁸ Ms/Hall, G.W., RGSSA, *George William Hall 1855-1915: Summary of the Period of his Life in Western Australia*.

⁹ Battye Library, MN 1519, Acc. 4797A/1, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988, deposited by Irma F. Wigley, which quotes Deborah Watkins, Alexander Wilson Castle's grand-daughter.

Tragic or not, Hall's life and career is not only interesting as an individual case study. It illustrates both how the quest for gold, and the growing power and influence of the press, shaped and contributed to the development of the late 19th and early 20th Century world. Within that world Hall had a brief but spectacular role. Finally, what this thesis has argued is that his place as significant figure in the historiography of Welsh and Western Australian press, and of gold-mining, should be recognised, and his contribution acknowledged.

Appendix 1

Hoover and the Sons of Gwalia

This appendix explores further how the public image of Herbert Hoover as engineer, politician and president, and Hoover's own observations, led to Hoover's role in the initial development of the Sons of Gwalia mine being vastly inflated, with an equivalent diminution in the role of Hall. This is explored here rather than in the body of the text, because, although an important part of the history of this mine, it is tangential to the subject of this thesis. While fully acknowledging Hoover's capabilities and his later major contribution to Western Australian mining, it seeks to re-balance the credit for that mine's development.

The context of Hoover's activities in Western Australia has received considerable critical study. Jeremy Mouat's 2008 article 'Just Now the 'Merican expert is the Prominent Man' outlines the role of American-trained mining engineers like Hoover and their part in changing production costs and methods the Western Australian goldfields.¹ Nash's biography of Hoover, later president of the United States, also gives considerable attention to the American engineers and their role in 'industrialisation' of gold-mining, which transformed the process of gold extraction through emphasis upon driving down production costs.² He also outlines effectively the problems Hoover faced on his return from China in 1901-2 to a Western Australia that 'had lost much of its luster', and his efforts to establish systematic American mining methods. It was through these activities that the London company of Bewick, Moreing, who feature prominently in Chapter 5 of the thesis regarding the development of the Sons of Gwalia mine, grew to pre-eminence after the turn of the century as mine managers and owners in Western Australian goldfields. There can be no doubt that Hoover, following his return to Australia, was chiefly responsible for the expansion of Bewick, Moreing's sphere of influence in that country and for

¹ Jeremy Mouat, ' "Just Now the 'Merican expert is the Prominent Man": American mining engineers and the Australian mining industry 1880s-1910s', pp.136-149.

² George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover; the Engineer*, pp.57-84, pp.226-232.

introduction of modern methods of mining which focussed on reduction of production costs. However, this applies almost entirely to the period well after the development and launch of the Sons of Gwalia Company in 1898.

Both Richard Hartley and Ronald Limbaugh have written extensively on the role of Bewick, Moreing in the Western Australian goldfields over this period, and also examined the role of Herbert Hoover, later to become president of the USA, in acquisition and development of the Sons of Gwalia Mine.³ Jeremy Mouat and Ian Phimister have produced a detailed revisionist study, which examines how far Hoover's version of his roles in both Australia and China reflects the reality of the actual situation in both localities.⁴ Blainey raises similar issues about the veracity of Hoover's claims in 'Herbert Hoover's Forgotten Years', both as to his role in the Sons of Gwalia, and his claim to have been the first who introduced a filter press into the process of ore reduction.⁵ The first volume of George H. Nash's minutely detailed biography of Hoover provides a tremendous amount of sourced information on Hoover's dealings with the Sons of Gwalia, and also corrects some misapprehensions, but certainly takes an over-favourable view of Hoover, concentrating more on aspects that reflect positively on the subject of his biography.⁶ Hoover and Hall's respective roles in the development of the mine are also illuminated by Edward McGowan's unpublished thesis of 1969 on the town of Leonora, together with his extensive article in *Australian Mining* which, while crediting Hoover's engineering ability, argues strongly that he overstated his own role in the purchase of the mine.⁷ McGowan's thesis also uses evidence from Charles M. Harris' correspondence with Bewick, Moreing agent, Edward Hooper, in the immediate post-second World War period, which emphasises Hooper's direct involvement in the recommendation to purchase

³ Richard G. Hartley, *A History of Technological Change in Kalgoorlie Gold Metallurgy 1895-1915*, Ph.D. thesis, Murdoch University (1998); Richard G. Hartley, 'Bewick, Moreing in Western Australian Gold Mining 1897-1904', pp.1-18; Ronald H. Limbaugh, 'Pragmatic Professional: Herbert Hoover's Formative Years as a Mining Engineer', 1895-1908, *Mining History Journal*, 11 (2004); Ronald H. Limbaugh, ' "There is a game against us": W. J. Loring's Troubled Years as Bewick-Moreing Company's General Manager and Partner in Western Australia', 1905-1912, *Journal of Australasian Mining History*, 2 (2004).

⁴ Jeremy Mouat and Ian Phimister, 'The Engineering of Herbert Hoover', pp.553-58.

⁵ Geoffrey Blainey, 'Herbert Hoover's Forgotten Years': *Business Archives and History* 3 (1963), pp.53-63.

⁶ George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover, the Engineer*, particularly, pp.55-87.

⁷ Edward E. McGowan, 'Herbert Clark Hoover and the Origins of the Sons of Gwalia Gold Mine', *Australian Mining*, 16 June 1969, pp.62-67; photocopy in Battye Library MN 1519 Acc. 4797A/9, papers of G.W. Hall 1895-1988; annotated photocopy in Gwalia Museum.

the ‘Sons of Gwalia.’⁸ However, starting with the period when Hoover became internationally known as a philanthropist, financier and politician, the story entered widespread circulation that, somehow, Hoover had ‘discovered’ the Sons of Gwalia.

This appendix pursues further the relative roles of George W. Hall and Herbert C. Hoover in the development of the Sons of Gwalia by examining how perceptions of them changed over a period of years as Hoover’s importance increased and memories of Hall faded. By the early 1920s, references to Hoover’s association with the Sons of Gwalia became more regular, and Hall’s were proportionately diminished.⁹ Throughout the 1930s, with Hoover’s increased international stature, references associating him with the mine became more frequent. However, it is when his memoirs were first serialised in *Colliers Journal*, New York in 1951, and a subsequent Associated American Press (AAP) release, was widely published in a number of Australian newspapers in February 1951, that the overstatements on his role in the Sons of Gwalia became embedded in the public and media minds, and it was asserted that it was he who had been responsible for the acquisition of the Sons of Gwalia.¹⁰

Many of these newspaper reports also present as fact a number of the other inaccuracies which the press report propounded, which have been accepted by subsequent historians, such as the ‘fact’ that he built the manager’s house (he commissioned it, and certainly was responsible for the foundations, but it was his successor, Welshman Harry James, who completed it. The mine letterbook on 25th November, after Hoover left, shows that James was at that date ordering the weatherboards, joists, flooring, doors and casements). Several also state that he installed a 50-stamp battery and cyanide plant. In fact, these were proposed by George Hall and planned by Hoover, but the cyanide plant was not set up until 1901 and a 30-stamp battery not until 1902, with the 50-stamp following by 1903. These accounts also state that Hoover left Australia for good in December 1898, when in fact he came

⁸ Edward E. McGowan, *An Economic and Social History of Leonora: Rise and fall of a Gold Town*, M.A. thesis, University of Western Australia (1969).

⁹ *Southern Cross Times*, 27 October 1923, *West Australian* (Perth), 3 May, 1929 and *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 21 July 1931 epitomise the change in balance of perceptions of the relative importance of Hall and Hoover.

¹⁰ *Launceston Examiner*, 19 February 1951, *Barrier Miner* (Broken Hill), 19 February 1951 and *Sunday Times* (Perth), 18 February 1951 among many others across Australasia.

back as Bewick, Moreing's agent in 1901-2 and then again in 1903, 1905 and 1907. What is striking is that sections of this AAP press report of February 1951, and its inaccuracies are re-quoted verbatim in many of the accounts of the early development of the 'Sons of Gwalia' from 1951 right up to the present day. Even those that do not quote the detail of this account, make the assumption that Hoover was the discoverer of the mine.

Finn John, in a footnote to the online first chapter of his projected book on Hoover, suggests that Hoover's early recollections of his career may not be accurate – certainly in this, the seminal moment in setting Hoover's mining career on its way and establishing his reputation, this would appear to be the case.¹¹ Hoover in his introduction to his *Memoirs* says that this portion was never intended for publication but says himself that 'Myths sometimes good and sometimes not appear as to all persons who enter public life'.¹² As Blainey comments with acuity in his article, 'Herbert Hoover's Forgotten Years', 'Preliminary study of untouched records, however, suggests that he allowed some old myths to remain and in hoeing others he tilled soil in which new myths could grow'.¹³ The Sons of Gwalia episode certainly echoes this, since from that date onwards, Hall's role was largely forgotten, and Hoover's magnified.

Hoover's version of his first involvement in the Sons of Gwalia is significantly overblown when assessed alongside other contemporary accounts. His earliest reference says that while on one of his camel expeditions in the outback, he came across the claim, which:

...was being worked by a group of Welshmen for owners in Wales. After supper I called upon them and was taken over their 'show' and their small mill. I became much impressed with the evidence of a real mine and on

¹¹ Finn John, http://herberthoover.us/Hoover_Ch1.html accessed 27 August 2011, states at the end of his on-line chapter on Hoover's wartime activities, 'it should be noted that Hoover's reminiscences in his memoirs, colored by later events and clouded by the imperfect memory of a time long before, are often inaccurate when it comes to precise particulars'. They seem on many occasions to have been particularly inaccurate when he claimed credit for successful outcomes rather than attributing it to others.

¹² H.C. Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover, Years of Adventure* p.v of Introduction.

¹³ Geoffrey Blainey, 'Herbert Hoover's Forgotten Years', p.54.

reaching the telegraph office the next day, I cabled to Mr Moreing that I thought the prospect well worth examination if he could get an option from their Welsh financial backers. This was done, and a few weeks later I completed the examination and recommended the purchase of a two-thirds interest for \$250,000 (*about £100,000*) and a provision of \$250,000 working capital. It was my first assumption of responsibility for what seemed to me a huge amount of money... I was carried for a small percentage interest and was appointed its first manager at \$10,000 a year and expenses...¹⁴

Even George H. Nash admits that ‘Hoover did not of course discover the Sons of Gwalia; it was already an active operating mine when he examined it’. However, it can be confidently argued that Nash places far too much credence on the status of Hoover at that time as an ‘expert “inspecting engineer” ’ and ignored the fact that many of the colony’s far more prominent engineers and surveyors had already been visited the mine and reported on it.¹⁵ George Hall’s publicity in ‘booming’ the mine through frequent news articles had been so effective that there were already in both Western Australia and London many reports of its richness, almost all of which quoted the similarity of the gold-bearing formation to Hannans. Even in his own footnotes Nash counters his own arguments. He averred that throughout the second half of 1897 such London journals as *the Statist* and the *London Australian* reported at length on Sons of Gwalia gold production and stated that on 25 November, ‘a bevy of powerful combinations’ was bidding for ownership of the Sons of Gwalia.¹⁶

We know that Hoover certainly travelled as far north as Lawlers (northwest of Sons of Gwalia) between 16 June and 16 July, and it is probable that his first visit to the Sons of Gwalia was made during this period, but Nash accepted there seems no truth in Hoover’s assertion in a letter to his cousin on that latter date that at that time the Sons of Gwalia belonged to Bewick, Moreing.¹⁷ He also admitted that there was no evidence that Hoover had any say in the recommendation of the actual purchase price. Indeed it can be argued that this would have been totally inappropriate; despite Hoover’s later financial acumen, at this stage his company’s trust in his expertise would certainly not extend thus far. Neither is there any record of Hoover’s price recommendation at this stage in Bewick, Moreing files and Nash seemed to accept

¹⁴ H.C. Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover, Years of Adventure*, p.33.

¹⁵ These included F. G. de Visme Gipps, J.W. Edols, W.R. Feldtmann and Western Australian Government surveyor, De Vries.

¹⁶ George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover, the Engineer*, endnote 118, chap. 5.

¹⁷ Hoover to Harriet Miles, cited in George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover, the Engineer*, p.64.

this. Yet despite this, Nash largely accepted Hoover's own version about his role in the acquisition of Sons of Gwalia as accurate, both in his autobiography, and in his autobiographical notes 'Information for Biographers'.¹⁸

One has to suggest that Hoover's perception of this event was significantly coloured, whether by the desire to present himself in a favourable light, or by hazy memory in old age, or both. It must be conceded that for Hoover the mine represented an extremely small feature in a long and controversial career; indeed, within three thick volumes of memoirs, he devoted only one and a half pages to it. However, it was he himself who stated that the Sons of Gwalia represented his first assumption of authority and responsibility; one would therefore have expected that his recall of his version of that key event in his life might have been more accurate.

Hoover, as has been shown, was the particular protégé of Edward Hooper, until February 1898 the Bewick, Moreing agent for Western Australia in Coolgardie. Hooper was subsequently to be the object of Hoover's copious and regular correspondence throughout the latter's managership at the mine, and acted as his adviser in investment matters during that same period. Even in his first letter back to Hoover, en route by ship to Britain, Hooper discussed disposing of 'our interest, indirect or otherwise in this [Sons of Gwalia] concern'.¹⁹ Hooper had also bought 1000 of Morgan's London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency shares of which 200 were for Hoover, though Hooper had been the one who put up the money. He said that he, not trusting Hall, had sold them for 27/6, unfortunately just before that company declared a dividend. However, he computed Hoover's one-fifth profit on the sale at £90.15s.5d, and offered 'If I can do anything for you in the share line I will gladly do so'.²⁰ It can be argued strongly that though it was Charles Algernon Moreing who had himself approved Hoover's initial appointment in Western Australia, it was the patronage and favourable opinion of Hooper developed during the previous six months at Coolgardie that afterwards ensured that he was appointed manager to the Sons of Gwalia. When Hoover's disputatious relationship with

¹⁸ H.C. Hoover, *Information for Biographers*, typescript, undated (circa.1914), Benjamin Allen Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, cited in Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover, the Engineer*.

¹⁹ Battye Library, MN 0294/1, Acc. 4793A/1, letter, 22 February, Hooper to Hoover.

²⁰ Battye Library, MN 0294/1, Acc. 4793A/1, letter, 3 June 1898, Hooper to Hoover.

Hooper's successor, Ernest Williams, resulted in his receiving notice of termination of employment, it was Hooper also who obtained from Moreing a placement in China for him.

George H. Nash admitted that the earliest references to Hoover on his arrival in Australia are laced with many inaccuracies, but he still considered that his 'background and ability were impressive enough'. One cannot underestimate the effect that Nash's masterly biography has had on virtually all subsequent critical perception of Hoover. He gives extensive details of many of the matters that the thesis covers regarding Hoover's role in the Sons of Gwalia, but since Hoover is the subject of the biography, it can be convincingly argued that, Nash's writing is skewed to present matters from his protagonist's perspective. One can understand this approach; after all, Hoover is his subject, he devoted a massive three three-volume biography to the man, and his account certainly provides a detailed picture of Hoover's key role, after his return to Australia by 1901-2, and subsequently, for Bewick, Moreing. However, this thesis argues that for Nash to give the same weight of importance to Hoover in the earlier six months' tenure as manager of Sons of Gwalia and superintendent for the district shows that on this matter, he does lack perspective. This is accentuated, as he tends to minimise or cast aspersions on sources where Hoover is reflected less favourably, and reinforces other aspects that reflect Hoover's undoubted strengths and (later) success. As one of several examples, he doubts the testimony of Atwater regarding Hoover's role in the conspiracy against Bewick, Moreing's Western Australia agent, Ernest Williams, who had succeeded Hooper.²¹ His remarks in the next paragraph that 'The goldfields in the mid-nineties were swarming with... men who thought they were mining experts - or pretended to be', may equally be considered an appropriate depiction of Hoover during this early period in Australia. It should after all, be remembered that he was inexperienced 23-year-old wearing a beard to attempt to pass himself off as being considerably older, in order to be considered for a post as mine manager, for which he would normally be expected to

²¹ George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover, the Engineer*, endnote 92, chap. 6. Nash implies, without supporting evidence, that Atwater's grievance against Hoover for 'promoting him sideways' coloured his account to Walter Liggett about the conspiracy. In a further note, he goes as far as to suggest that Loring, who was to become Hoover's own selected appointee as manager of the mine, purchaser of his Sons of Gwalia shares and his successor in Western Australian operations, might similarly be biased against Hoover.

be at least 30 years old. Several other authors of 1930s 'muck-raking' biographies of Hoover were far less complimentary about him.²²

Nash's biography said that Hoover was mentioned in contemporary newspapers in Perth and Coolgardie, during his six months as manager of the Sons of Gwalia, though he speculated, probably accurately, that these might have been Hoover-initiated press releases from the Coolgardie office.²³ Yet though his image in Coolgardie might have appeared positive, and Hoover was certainly active in inspection in the Mount Margaret Goldfield during 1897, that perception of Hoover's importance seems to have barely penetrated the *Malcolm Chronicle and Leonora Advertiser*, the newly-established weekly for that goldfield, by the time he started as mine manager, or indeed even by the time he left Sons of Gwalia and Australia. On 2 April 1898, there was a brief reference in the newspaper to Hoover's forays to examine claims. Subsequently during his six-month period as manager, though there were several stories in the Coolgardie press, only three minimal references to him can be found in that paper, which was the most local to the mine, two relating to the quarterly reports on the mine's production, and one to his departure from his post. There were no comments, positive or negative on his capability. Clearly, Coolgardie's publicity did not bear much weight in Leonora, and some of his own actions in increasing hours and introducing single-handed working would not have made him popular in the local media.

Hall and Castle, in contrast, were extensively reported upon in the *Malcolm Chronicle* during this time, as has been detailed in Chapters 4 and 5, and it is clearly they who were regarded at the time as the pioneers and developers responsible for opening up the Sons of Gwalia, and indeed the Mount Margaret goldfield. There is only a single mention in a newspaper during Hoover's time at Sons of Gwalia, or during his following periods in Australia, of his claimed role in the acquisition of the

²² John Hamill, *The strange case of Mr Hoover under Two Flags* (New York: William Faro, 1931); James O'Brien, *Hoover's Millions and How he Made Them* (New York: James J O'Brien Publishing Company, 1932); Walter W. Liggett, *The Rise of Herbert Hoover* (New York: HK Fly Company, 1931, reprint Lightning Source UK, 2010). These were only three of a number of less than complimentary 'smear' biographies aimed principally at countering Hoover's campaign for President.

²³ *Coolgardie Miner* May 22, 1897; *West Australian Goldfields Courier*, June 19, 1897 for example. Nash (*The Life of Herbert Hoover, the Engineer*), pp.288-290 makes it clear Hoover would frequently manipulate the press to his own ends.

mine.²⁴ Though it was claimed that he did not like to consort with news reporters, he was certainly very ready to use newspapers and other means to publicise his role as a mining expert. It is inconceivable that he would have not have been readier to assert his role in the acquisition at the time, if he had in fact played such a significant part.²⁵

Hoover in his autobiography erroneously stated that he arrived in Western Australia in October 1897.²⁶ He had in fact been employed by Bewick, Moreing in Western Australia since May of that year. Deborah Watkins, Alexander Castle's grand-daughter, in her monographs for the Western Australian Genealogical Society, suggested that he may have been initially in the colony as a freelance. She suggests also that Hoover may have worked as a sampler at Sons of Gwalia in that capacity, and that her family had a picture of the staff at that time, which it was claimed included Hoover, though as this source cannot now be found, it cannot be confirmed.²⁷ However, Bewick, Moreing does in effect appear to have been his employers from the date he left London, and passenger records of his arrival on 13 May, 1897 were specific, so any employment at the Sons of Gwalia must have been after that date.²⁸ According to Hoover himself, his first employment for Bewick, Moreing was, as acting manager for Hannan's Brownhill mine while the manager was on holiday. Nash, however, detailed a number of earlier activities, when Hoover had been primarily employed as an 'inspecting engineer' examining mines and evaluating possible purchases for the London and West Australian Exploration Company, a company under the control of Bewick, Moreing. Just like Hall, his main initial

²⁴ *Perth Morning Herald*, n.d. cutting, Battye Library G.M. Leader Donation, MN 0294, Acc.1734A.

²⁵ Battye Library MN 0294/1 Acc. 4793A/1, for example, Hooper letter to Hoover 22 April, 1898, 'With regard to your name not appearing in the prospectus... I must say that I do not think it is the usual custom of our firm to mention the name of the engineer reporting'; Hooper to Hoover, 6 May, 1898, 'The great similarity of our names has somewhat mixed up the meaning of what I have said for you will note that although I referred to you, the paper gives it that I spoke about myself'. His letters suggest strongly that Hoover had asked him to 'put his name around'; Hooper's excuse, however, suggests that he had chosen instead to emphasise his own role and played down that of Hoover.

²⁶ Edward E. McGowan, *An Economic and Social History of Leonora: Rise and fall of a Gold Town*, pp.58-59. McGowan unfortunately accepted as accurate Hoover's error in his *Memoirs*, giving October as his date of arrival. This was seized upon by some critics to undermine the credibility of his perfectly valid criticisms on Hoover's methods and results. For instance, the copy of the 1969 *Australian Mining* article in the Gwalia Museum, Sons of Gwalia is annotated with unjustified pencilled accusations of deliberate falsification by McGowan, while his legitimate criticisms are ignored.

²⁷ Deborah Watkins, family history monograph.

²⁸ George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover, The Engineer*, p.53 quotes the Water Police Office Inward report for his date of arrival, and refers also to several contemporary newspaper sources.

activity was travelling into the goldfield areas, examining and identifying claims for his employers to purchase. Like Hall also, he had a tremendous capacity for work, and echoed Hall's coverage of extensive tracts of country, inspecting claims and potential purchases. Where he showed his particular capability at that period was in the detail, clarity and accuracy of his reports.

In conclusion, as I have argued previously, in his memoirs Hoover overstated his role in the acquisition of the Sons of Gwalia mine; though it was definitely his report that finally triggered Hooper's recommendation for its purchase by the London and Western Australian Exploration Company. Many others of greater experience and status than himself had been to the mine before him, and the mine was well known in Western Australian goldfield circles as a major find. It is only retrospectively, because of his later fame that Hoover's importance in the purchase, managership and early progress of the Sons of Gwalia mine has been so significantly inflated at the expense of the reputations of Alexander Wilson Castle and George W. Hall.

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Y Brython Cymreig
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Aberdare Times
Cambria Daily Leader (Swansea)
The Cambrian (Swansea)
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South Wales Daily News
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Blackwood's Magazine
British Australasian
The Bullionist (The Financier and Bullionist)
Capitalist
Chamber of Commerce Journal
City Leader (London)
The Critic
Economist
The Englishwoman's Review
Finance
Financial News (London)
Financial Times
The London Gazette
The Miner, An Advanced Political Journal
Mining Journal, Railway and Commercial Gazette
Mining World
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Coolgardie Miner
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Inquirer and Commercial News (Perth)
Kalgoorlie Miner
Kalgoorlie Western Argus
Malcolm Chronicle and Leonora Advertiser
Menzies Miner
Morning Herald (Perth)
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